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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[DISOWNED.]

## TWICE REJECTED;

OR,

## THE NAMELESS ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Baronet's Son," "Who Did It?" &c., &c.

### CHAPTER III.

Listen to a maiden's prayer;  
Thou canst save though from the soiler,  
Thou canst save amid despair—  
Safe may she sleep beneath thy care.

DAYS had passed away. The funeral of the Countess of Deloraine had been celebrated with even more than the customary pomp and splendour that befitted the rank of the deceased. The sorrowing husband, the relatives and friends and tenantry of the Lorraines, had duly honoured the mournful ceremonial with their presence, and no expenditure had been spared in the gorgeous sepulchral rites.

But one form was omitted: one—nay, two of the truest and most natural of the mourners were absent from the funeral train. The Lady Leila was not permitted to follow her mother to the grave, and as was whispered in the castle, had but once obtained by a sort of stealth an interview with the silent dead. Nor was her future husband, the intended son-in-law of the countess, invited to the ceremony. Some excuse that could scarcely have been accepted was given

for the omission of any invitation to the Marquis of Mayfield.

And it was surmised that some strained point of etiquette, or some fancied offence or slight at the time of the accident, caused the blank in the group who should have stood round the vault in which the wife of the present head of that long descended race was to be consigned.

Whatever the cause, the Lady Leila lacked at once the melancholy consolation of being present to join in the last solemn rites, and the yet stronger support of her lover's presence during those mournful days.

Alone she wept in her room while the train was absent from the castle. Alone she knelt and prayed, and alone she penned a gushing letter of grief and sadness to him who had won her young heart, and who was to be the companion and support of her future life.

The tears poured down her cheeks till they moistened the very paper as she folded the sheet in an envelope, and her pen was tremblingly directing the letter when the door opened and her father entered. There was a stern glance on his face that could scarcely be accounted for even by the sorrow through which he had passed. And no touch of sympathy or tenderness melted his expression as his eye fell on the fair young creature in her sable robe who rose respectfully to receive him.

Never could father have a lovelier, gentler daughter to mingle her tears with his, or console his grief and fill up the desolate blank that death had left. Yet Lord Deloraine calmly seated himself in a corner where Leila could not have approached him had she so desired. And his figure and face were rigid as a marble statue while he spoke.

"The countess is gone for ever now," he began, coldly. "All further constraints are over. Henceforth the hateful bondage may be disregarded; I am free to act without disrespect to the dead. And, therefore, it is best that no time should be lost since I cannot wear a mask on my real feelings. Leila, your turn is come now. You must leave this house, and without delay," he added, fiercely.

She stared—absolutely stared at him in wild surprise and terror. Was he mad? Had grief affected his brain? Such things had been ere now, and it was the only solution to the mystery of such conduct.

"Dear papa, you are ill. No wonder," she said softly. "Surely I have not offended you. I am so wretched that I could not even dream of paining you, my only surviving parent!"

The earl's face darkened ominously.

"Your only surviving parent" begs to decline the epithet you assign to him," he said, scornfully. "And it is not because I am at all out of my mind that I speak thus. You need not shelter yourself under that idea, young lady. In plain English—you are no child of mine, and you will be prepared to leave this house that has so long been wrongfully your home without delay."

Leila's face literally blanched. Her eyes flashed with mingled astonishment and shame and incredulity. Then a crimson flush mantled her white cheeks and brow, and her lips quivered as she asked indignantly:

"My lord, how dare you! Can you slander my dear mother's memory ere she is well cold in her grave? I will not—I do not believe evil of her, not if it were sworn on oath! It is a foul libel," she went on, her slight form drawn up

with a dignity that seemed to date its proportions, and that for a moment awed and silenced the bitter rage of Lord Deloraine to a silent sullenness of wrath.

But it was only the lull of a violent storm that gives it additional strength in its tempestuous violence.

"If No. Do not deceive yourself, young woman. If I have any cause to complain of her who is gone it is not from any unfaithfulness to herself nor to me. It is but a weakness which perhaps arose from her very love for me, and which I am bound to pardon and to conceal, as I best may. You are no more her child than you are mine. You were brought here in your very infancy to supply the place of a dead infant. You are a nameless, obscure foundling, probably the child of shame since your mother was so willing to get rid of you. You have caused the only cloud between my wife and myself. You are the disgrace and curse who will blight my future years. And you shall no longer be an intruder in this house, nor an irritating blister on my soul. Now do you understand me, girl? If I suffer you shall be punished, you shall leave the house ere this week is over, and never cross my path more—never, or you shall rue the day!"

His words came out with a bitter, forced, rancorous more severe and biting and hopeless than if they had been spoken in the wildest gust of passion. Leila listened with a wild incredulity that by degrees faded into blank despair.

Cold and white and crushed, she bowed her head as a delicate plant before a driving storm, and when at last he ceased came a low suppressed wail.

"Is it true—is the cruel tale true?" she said. "If you have any mercy or hope in the Almighty's mercy, do not deceive me. That is all I ask," she went on, with a violent effort to master her feelings and comprehend as it were the actual truth.

That lovely young creature, so crushed and yet so brave, so suffering and yet so firm, so fair and yet so desolate. But the evil spirit in Lord Deloraine's breast was too deep-seated and too merciless for pity to anyone save himself.

"It is true if the dying words of a noble and save in this, honourable woman are to be trusted," he said, coldly. "And you will find that I shall act upon them as such. Lord Mayfield will be apprised without delay of the truth, and of course all idea of marriage with an obscure and probably illegitimate foundling will be at an end in his mind. You will quit this house in forty-eight hours from this time. I shall give you enough to keep you from actual distress till you have found a situation to get your living, and arrange a temporary lodging for you on condition that you will never see nor trouble me more. Now you know all, and I insist on your attending at once to my orders, or it will be worse for you."

He rose as he spoke to leave the room. She did not speak. She made no effort to detain or turn him from his purpose. But as the door closed behind her willows parent her fortitude gave way. She slowly and gradually sank on the ground, a deep and overwhelming faintness came over her, and for some minutes at least she forgot her misery in unconsciousness.

But this merciful oblivion was ended by the entrance of Barbara Myers, who had perhaps been rather nearer to her young lady's sitting-room than was quite to be accounted for by the usual duties of her position at that hour. And if she had not caught some of the harsh and bitter words her lord had levelled at the ignored one, she had a shrewd certainty that something was wrong, and that the earl had vented some grievance on her young lady with unpardonable severity. The sight of Leila's white face and insensible form roused the maiden's indignation to the highest pitch.

"Poor darling. It's high time she was married," she muttered, sharply. "I wish the marquis would come and take her away whether the earl consents or no, and never mind the death and the mourning."

It was a strange feeling when Leila gradually

awoke to consciousness, with all the misty and choking sensations after a severe fainting-fit. A brief interval of stunned incredulity and then a passion of agonised tears came to her relief, and she hid her face in her hands and bowed her slight form in overwhelming grief.

"Lady Leila, my dear, dear young lady, what is it? Do not give way like this. You must not fret so for my poor lady. You will make yourself ill, and then what would Lord Mayfield say?" said the maid, using, as she supposed, the most effectual method of consolation, which was instead only a slow and acute torture.

"Hush!—hush! Do not speak of him, Barbara. We shall not meet again—never—never!" she wailed. "Poor—poor Digby," came from her unsealed lips.

"Ah! I see, a lover's quarrel," thought the sagacious Barbara; "that will soon cure itself. Pooh, pooh, my dear young lady. That is all nonsense," she added, cheerily. "I am sure that Charles and me have had many a fall out. But, dear me, it always came round again, and we were better friends than ever. And we are all the same flesh and blood, my lady, if you'll excuse my saying so," she went on. "And nature's the same all the world over, and love too, to my thinking."

A wan smile crossed the poor stricken girl's lips.

"Barbara, I believe you are true to me—that you love me," began Leila, after a pause.

"Indeed—indeed I do. You have been very kind to me, my lady; quite different to some ladies I know of, and I'm sure I'm not ungrateful. And I hope you'll take me with you when you're married. I'd break my heart to leave you till I'm married myself, my lady."

"My good Barbara, you will be married long before me. Indeed, I shall never—never marry now," returned Lady Leila. "Barbara, will you—can you keep a dark, terrible secret for a short time, till it can be told safely? It will not be for very long. It will be public soon enough. But still, Barbara, you will be the first—the very first—to know the truth, and you can do me the very greatest service one human being can do another, if you will."

Barbara stared in blank amazement.

"Me, my dear young lady? What can you mean? I'm sure I'd do anything—anything that you would bid me, for I'm sure it wouldn't be wrong, nor deprive me of my character, nor my bread," she said, timidly.

"No; that you know well, my poor girl. It may be my own case before long, and I'm sure I'd never bring it on anyone else."

"Yours, my lady? You are jesting, or—" The girl abruptly and fearfully stopped in her sentence.

"Delirious, you think? No; that's not it, Barbara. I thought the same just now of my—I mean of Lord Deloraine," returned Leila, half scornfully; "but it's all a mistake. I mean what I say, Barbara. I shall have to work hard for a livelihood. It rests with you to be my first helper—to set me on the road to gain a living. I must leave this house within a day or two, my poor girl, and you also, no doubt. You will suffer from my involuntary crime, Barbara, and its penalty," she added. "You cannot guess the truth. I never could have dreamed it, you know. Could you think that I'm a changeling? You've heard of such things, and it's a true—true! I cannot doubt it. The earl is so terribly angry that it should be so. He could never pretend it—never invent it. My poor—poor mother—I should say, Lady Deloraine—and she concealed it so long as she dare; but she could not die with it on her heart. And it's no wonder—none. It is so dreadful to act a falsehood as well as speak it. The temptation, the pressure, must have been dreadful for her to do it!" she wailed, clasping her hands in agony.

"Poor girl! Her instincts even in that hour were unselfish and pitying rather than resentful. She unconsciously touched the waiting-maid's heart as no wild plaints and reproaches could have done."

"My poor, dear young lady, you are an angel

anyway, whether you're my lord or lady's daughter or not, and that never can be taken from you. And, I'm sure, there's nothing I won't do for you. I'll stand by you to the very last, and so would all of us, as my lord will find out. You're the idol of the household. And of course I'll work for you, in your bringing up to have such a trouble, you may be sure. I'll do my utmost, though I don't see my way quite clear to do it, dear young lady," she added.

"To do what? Get me a shelter or a living, dear Barbara?"

"No, my lady, not exactly. I am sure I can find some place for you to go to; only it's so hard for a young lady like you to get anything to do; but I am sure something will turn up."

"Anyway I will try, Barbara," said Leila, calmly. "It will be a good thing to be busy and not have time to think, won't it?"

Perhaps the maid scarcely was philosophical enough to comprehend the full tone of the reasoning; but she was thankful for her young lady to have any idea of consolation in her troubles, and with innate delicacy of feeling she suppressed all curiosity, and did not press for details of this astounding event in the household.

"Give me a few—very few days. I shall have time to think then, and I'm sure I shall manage something," she said. "I've got no parents, or they'd take you like a shot, and be glad of you. But I was brought up with an aunt and uncle, which alters everything; but I've something in my head that I feel sure will turn out all right," and Barbara gave a sagacious nod that was more significant than words.

The exhausted girl was fain to rest on such an assurance. She thanked the kindly attendant from her very heart for the regret and tenderness she exhibited, and gave the most welcome proof of her gratitude by permitting her to establish her on a couch in her dressing-room, and after drinking a glass of wine and swallowing a biscuit to revive her drooping spirits she was fain to abandon herself to the repose that she so much needed, and postpone the consideration of the future till she was more calm and able to contemplate her proper and possible course.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Farewell, and for ever, my first love and last,  
May thy joys be to come, mine live in the past;  
In sorrow and sadness this hour falls on me,  
But light as thy love may it fleet over thee.

THE Marquis of Mayfield had certainly been an ill-used man. Such was his own conviction and that of others who were aware of the circumstances. He had not only been sent away from the presence of his ladylove, and the privilege of consoling her in her grief been denied him, but he actually was refused the ordinary and scant courtesy of being present at the funeral of her mother.

A brief line from the earl had apprised him of the death, and a few broken-hearted, hurried words from Leila had spoken the anguish of her young spirit, then there was a blank. The rites of sepulture must have been performed without his being bidden to assist in their solemnisation. Leila might be ill, dying, broken-hearted, and the household in too deep trouble for him to be remembered in such double agony; and in time Digby had worked himself up to a conviction that some such terrible catastrophe had happened.

The post arrived and among other letters that were laid before him were two from Castle Lorraine. One was from the earl, in his crabbed, resolute characters, that were so significant of the man and his nature; the other was from Leila. There was no mistaking her graceful writing, so free and legible, and yet so elegant. Yet in this instance it seemed to be changed. There was a tremulousness in the letters, and the words were so irregular that it appeared as if they had been penned in agitation and haste. Digby tore open hers first. Perhaps it contained some explanation of the mystery that had galled and surprised him. In any case he should be able to



deduce some satisfaction from the letter, however vague. It was certainly brief enough to be mysterious, and the few lines it contained bewildered his brain till it was fairly giddy with astonishment and perplexity.

"Dear," it ran, "dear, noble Digby, I would fain bid you farewell myself, though my father does not know of my intention, but it is my sole act of disobedience so long as I remain in his house, and I cannot rest without telling you that I have been innocent—yes, utterly innocent, Digby—of any deception on you or any human being. Digby, I know that you will not—cannot dream of me now; you will feel that it is impossible. But if you should feel any wild ideas that it would be dishonourable or unkind to give me up I implore you not to attempt it, for it would be useless. I would never, never listen to such an idea, and it would torture me in vain. Farewell, dearest, best loved, I may tell you now how well and truly I loved you. Do some justice and bestow some pity, even though it is necessary and right to forget her, on poor Leila. Digby, good-bye, and may you be happy with some more fortunate and worthy wife."

The marquis dropped the letter in utter astonishment. What could it mean? Was Leila delicious—mad? What dreadful event had happened to part them thus suddenly, and as she implied, irrevocably. He nerved himself to open the earl's letter, and perused its cold, formal lines.

"The Earl of Deloraine is conscious of mingled feelings of resentment and shame and regret in the revelations he is about to make to Lord Mayfield. The earl had looked upon him as a future and much valued son-in-law. Now that is at an end. Lord Deloraine has no longer a daughter to give to any man. The astounding and disgraceful truth was revealed to him within a very brief interval. The young person who passed as Lady Leila Loraine was a changeling—an impostor. Of course, there can be but one alternative, and that Lord Deloraine has adopted. She is banished from the home where she has been an intruder, and the Marquis of Mayfield may rest assured that all the atonement that can be made for the involuntary fraud has been at once put in effect. The agony and the humiliation fortunately is spared him of discovering the deception too late."

Such was the cold, formal rupture of dear ties and fond hopes. Digby sat in rigid excess of astonishment.

"What was to be done?" was the subject of his silent contemplations.

Did he hesitate? Alas! alas! if there was a faint tinge of doubt and distressed uneasiness of wrong, it was but for a passing moment; it was evidently impossible. If Lord Deloraine could not even tolerate the presence of the girl in the castle, was it to be imagined that the heir of a line sans reproche would persist in marrying an obscure unknown, foisted as it were surreptitiously on his love and notice?

No; if he had met with her accidentally, had he fallen in love and wooed and won her with knowledge of her inferiority, he would only have had himself to thank for the trouble and distress, and been base and unworthy to have drawn back from his bond.

Now it was different. It had been by no vestige of imprudence on his part that he was in his present trouble; it was utterly from without. And Digby began to feel that he was a very ill-used man, and rather to pity himself for the pains and annoyance he was suffering than to sympathise with the unhappy Leila in her outcast, terrible fall.

What could he reply?—what could be his next step in the matter, was the subject now of his consideration. And at length he resolved to repair to the castle itself, and learn more details of the strange drama which had been so startlingly revealed.

There was a cold formality in the earl's letter that was at once galling and provocative of curiosity, even if of no warmer and nobler

feeling. And without any further reply or question he would go down and demand the explanation that was his due. The orders were quickly given; the journey arranged for the following day, and in a few brief hours he expected to be put in possession of the facts, however little they might avail to console him.

Perhaps it did cross his mind that some alleviating circumstance would, in a measure, tend to change his resolution to relinquish one he had loved so well. But if so it was but a forlorn hope, and one that was certainly no element in the motives of his journey. Nor did it occupy his thoughts during its progress. The carriage that conveyed him to Castle Loraine drove rapidly up the well-known road to the stately mansion.

All was the same so far as the scene of the tragic story was concerned. The flowers and the trees and hot houses all appeared in their luxuriant splendour and beauty. But when he came near to the house itself all was different. The windows were most of them closed, the blinds down as if for a death, and a stillness like death pervaded the whole mansion.

The hall bell was pulled, and to his fancy it gave a somewhat dismal and uncertain sound, as if a muffled gong responded to the summons. But the worst of his impressions was removed when the door was opened, and a middle-aged, respectable woman—somewhat between the rank of a lady and a servant—herself appeared to reply to his application for admission.

"Is Lord Deloraine absent?" he asked of the matronly female, who was evidently unaware of his identity.

"Yes, sir, he is indeed," was the reply. "And no wonder, poor gentleman, after what has taken place," she said, apparently indignant at the very question.

"You mean the death of his wife?" asked the marquis.

"I mean all the troubles, sir, though I don't quite understand what they were," replied the woman. "But any way the young lady is gone also, and there was a sad business about it altogether, and I believe she will never come back again. I daresay it was no fault of hers, poor girl. Still it did seem very hard on my lord."

Perhaps Digby thought it was still more hard on him and on the unhappy Leila than the obstinate and resentful widower, but he was scarcely inclined to discuss the point with the stranger.

"Will the earl be absent long?" he asked.

"It's quite uncertain, sir. He has broken up his establishment here, and my husband, Mr. Dawson, who was the steward you see, but lived out of the house, consented to come with me and take care of everything, though I, for my part, had rather have staid in our own home. But as we have no children, you see, it was not so difficult as it would have been in some cases."

Lord Mayfield was scarcely enough interested in the family affairs and tactics of Mr. Dawson to attend to the hardships of her position. He was only wondering what he should do next. Should he make himself known on the chance of obtaining more confidential information, even at the risk of being criticized and talked over as the unfortunate betrothed of Leila. His interest in the affair naturally prevailed over such morbid delicacy of feeling.

"You will perhaps be less surprised at my visit and my questions when I tell you who I am, Mrs. Dawson," he resumed. "I am the Marquis of Mayfield, and expected to find the earl here, as I had a letter from him some few days since."

The woman's whole manner changed.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, my lord. It was very stupid of me not to know your lordship; but I've only had a glimpse of you as you went by our house, you know. But if you'll please to walk upstairs and sit down, my lord, I'll tell you as well as I can all I know, and that's not so very much, only what has happened openly, as one may say, not the real ins and outs of what took place."

Digby willingly assented. He felt as if a dead blank was before his view—a gulf opened

under his feet as this sudden disappearance, this breaking of every clue to the hopes and prospects he had cherished with fond brightness of vision. So he went into the well-known hall, and the good woman ushered him to the sitting-room which was nearest to the door, and which had been used rather as a convenient resting-place for either guests or persons on business than an actual reception apartment. The marquis sat down, and after some little persuasion induced his companion to take a chair, which enabled them to converse somewhat more at their leisure and comfort.

"Well, my lord, of course you know there was some mistake or deception about Lady Leila's birth? Poor thing! I can't help calling her so, though I suppose she is no more 'lady' than I am," began the steward's wife, "and though my lord sternly and positively desired my husband to declare to anyone whom it concerned that it was no fault of the poor, dear countess, and that the sin lay at another person's door, I confess I don't quite think the same, do you, my lord?"

"You mean that Lady Deloraine had some knowledge of Lady Leila's birth?" said the marquis.

"Yes, my lord, I do. I can't say, of course, but it stands to reason that it was nobody else's business to make a fraud like that, and it was very odd that it was never known till my lady died. She must have confessed something, that's clear, to my mind, or why should be this sudden kick up?" continued Mrs. Dawson, sagely.

"Do you then believe anything was wrong in the case of the countess?" asked Digby.

"I think that for some reason or other she did pass this child off as my lord's when she knew quite well that it wasn't," returned Mrs. Dawson, firmly. "And whether it was only to give a living child to the house, or whether there was anything worse, I cannot say, but any way, it was very odd that it should be a girl if it was only an outsider, as you may say. You would certainly think it would have been a boy she would have chosen, don't you, my lord? And that makes me so doubly sorry, as one may say, for the earl. It's very hard of him to have brought up the girl as his own all these years, and made a grand marriage for her and all that, and then find it's a strange child of some sort and none of his. And if I may make bold to say so, my lord, it's hard on you, too, and everyone feels it, and a respectful sympathy for you, only it was a lucky escape, as one may say."

Mrs. Dawson spoke so deferentially that it was impossible to resent the freedom which even the sympathy of inferiors is supposed to convey, but the marquis only acknowledged it by a bow of grave thanks.

"And," he said, "where is she?—Lady Leila, I mean, as there is no other name to distinguish her."

"Poor thing, I do not know, my lord. She went off quite quietly and secretly, though I expect that her maid, Barbara, had something to do with it though she won't confess it, you see, my lord. And, of course, if she did, she'd soon have to tell what became of the poor girl, for lots of persons would want to know."

"Did the earl know when she went away?" asked the marquis.

"I don't believe he did. There was a good deal of quiet scheming to my idea, my lord, for when the poor girl did go at last, it was just as if she had taken a walk or a drive, for there was no baggage at all, and no one took her to the station, and in fact it's all just as much a mystery to me as to you. But we all agreed she will never return, and that no one will ever, except by chance, hear of her again," continued Mrs. Dawson.

A crowd of memories and imaginings rushed on the mind of the whilome betrothed of the poor exiled outcast as he listened. That beautiful, gently bred, graceful, accomplished creature whom he had so proudly called his own—aye, and with as much certainty as if he had stood with her at the altar, was now a fugitive

and for aught he knew, without money or friends.

What danger she must incur, thus exposed and thus unprotected, could scarcely even be guessed by anyone who had not mingled with the crowd of plebeians and rough natures with which poor Leila would now be cast. Still Digby could form a tolerably good idea of some kind of perils to which the girl would be exposed, and he shuddered as the image of that sweet, refined one rose up before him.

"Where is this Barbara—Lady Leila's maid, I think, if I remember rightly?" he asked.

"She is gone away from the neighbourhood also, my lord; she's got an excellent place as maid, and one may say, companion to a lady about to travel for some months or more. And that makes it stranger, since Lady Leila must have gone somewhere quite alone, and the maid will be away and cannot see to her at all. Dear, dear, it would almost have been a blessing if my lady had died suddenly when she was thrown, and then all this would have been no harm to anybody!"

Perhaps the morality of this idea was not quite unimpeachable. But yet to say truth, the distracted and dissatisfied suitor was half inclined to agree with her. It would have spared him at once misery and self-reproach and perplexity.

He could scarcely feel that he had quite acted a noble and manly part in his utter desertion of the innocent girl who was to have been his wife. Yet he certainly could not have dared the scorn of the world, aggravated as it would have been by the bitter and revengeful efforts of Lord Deloraine to destroy all chance of Leila's happiness. There was nothing more to say nor to hear, and he prepared to depart.

"Is there any channel through which letters can be sent to the earl, or is it a secret where he is staying?" he asked.

"If you write here, my lord, all letters will be forwarded to him through the agent, but not I nor my husband, nor any one that is left here, have any idea about him. I fancy he is gone abroad, and will be moving about for a long time, but whether he will ever settle down or make up his mind to come back here I can't say. I don't suppose he'll ever endure the place, and it will go to a cripple, you see, and no one knows who after him. It's a terrible thing, there being no son, you see. It's no consequence for the likes of me, but it's terrible when it comes to be great noblemen like my lord. It's to be hoped you'll get married and have sons, my lord, for it is a caution to anyone," was the moral reflections with which the interview ended.

And the marquis drove off once more, with but a half satisfied attempt to persuade himself that he had done his very utmost, and that if the husband of Lady Deloraine and the reputed father of the unfortunate Leila was so fully convinced of the turpitude of the case, and the impossibility of compromise, it was not for him, the lover of a few months, the suitor of a few weeks, to insist on a different course with such imperfect means of information.

And with a desperate attempt to banish the miserable episode from his thoughts, and vanquish the pangs that still haunted his breast, he returned to the metropolis and threw himself into the very heart of the gayest set he could command by way of crushing and drowning thought.

But as yet the injunction of the sagacious Mrs. Dawson to find another bride was not within his plan. He shrank from rehearsing the preliminaries so painfully cut short, and it must be only when his heart or fancy or ambition should be caught that he could venture on a courtship and a bridal with a second choice—a second and perhaps colder love.

And Leila—where was she, the helpless and the desolate one? Where had she found refuge in her expulsion from the splendid home she had believed to be her natural right? Was she crushed by her misfortune, or indignant at the cruel injuries she had received? Was she a

spiritless victim, or a discontented and repining struggler with fate? She could scarcely have been blamed had she given way to either of these temptations.

At eighteen it was scarcely to be supposed she would possess the strength of mind or self-control to endure patiently or firmly such dull reverses. Her love hopelessly at an end; her parentage unknown, hurled from the very height of all that could make her proud and happy in every blessing earth could bestow, there was now scarcely a domestic in her supposed father's household, or a tenant cottager in his domain, whom she might not have envied, and gladly changed with in their humble sphere.

Yet there was a noble endurance, and faith and hope in that young creature's mind that supported her even in that overpowering load of misery and humiliation. Was it that instinct of the race to which she had been taught to believe she belonged; or was it the buoyancy of youth that served her in such stead in this deep sorrow.

Perhaps it was so sudden and incredible that to her buoyant youth it seemed impossible that it should be true, that she should not wake up from the dream of misery as she had from that of joy. In any case, she was a heroine, though of no lofty conspicuous type, but the true womanly heroine of fortitude and religious submission and faith, and such could never be deserted nor disappointed if there be justice in heaven or earth.

Barbara had said truly that she was at a loss to find an asylum for her young lady, as, an orphan herself, she had no home where to plead for admission. But chance favoured her, or rather it should be said, the Providence that disposes of the fates of His creatures.

"Ah, my dear—dear young lady, I have good news at last," she broke in with one day when Leila was at the very brink of despair. "I went to see about a place that I had heard of from a friend of mine, who's going to be married, and I believe I've got it, and a good one too, but that's neither here nor there. Just when all was settled, and I was going to leave the room, Madame the Comtesse, for it's a French lady I'm going to, called me back, and said in her pretty English, 'You do not happen to know of any English lady who can speak foreign languages a little, and can sing, and yet won't be too proud or too dull a companion, and do what is necessary for a friend of mine. She is an Italian lady, and a great invalid, and yet she must stay in England for some time.' She wishes to meet with such a young person as I describe, and it is so difficult to trust anyone; and my Henriette speaks so highly of you; and she has been so faithful to me I thought you would not deceive me if you knew of anyone who would be a comfort to this poor invalid friend of mine."

"My dear young lady, I could hardly find patience to wait till she had finished," went on Barbara, "and then I told her I was sure I could, and that it was a young lady who had just lost her mother, and whose father was very kind to me, and that I had known you for years, my dear young lady."

"And I told Henriette, my friend, to do all she could, and she guessed, I suppose, what I meant, though I told her it was a secret which I was bound not to tell. So I have very little doubt you will have the situation, and it will be better for you than being plagued with children to teach, or their mothers to find fault with you. And besides," she added, hesitatingly, "it might be rather difficult at first to get a berth of that sort if you did not wish to be known or to give a reference."

Leila listened with deep thankfulness, even though there was a natural shrinking from the sad dreariness of such a life as lay before her that saddened her feelings, and it needed some effort to display and express the gratitude and pleasure she really felt at the tidings.

"Thanks—thanks, dear Barbara, my only friend; you little know the boon you have conferred—the blessing you have brought," she

said, fervently. "I will do my best. I am glad—very glad; and yet—"

And human nature could stand no more strain. She burst into a flood of tears, and the tender, sympathising maid drew her to her breast and soothed the passionate outburst with kindly caresses and soft words. But it did not last long. She was too reasonable and too conscious of her real position to indulge such needless grief.

"Forgive me," she said, "forgive me. Only it rather frightens me to anticipate what is before me, that is all. I am thankful—very thankful to have this chance of getting a maintenance. Do not think me ungrateful, dear Barbara."

And again the irrepressible tears rolled down the cheeks, and the bright eyes glittered through the tears as they coursed down her cheeks.

"Dear Lady Leila, I am sure all will end well at last; you are so sweet, so good, that you must have the good you deserve at last," she repeated, cheerfully.

And Lady Leila, in her unselfish bravery and sweetness, mastered that natural outburst of feeling, and began to discuss, with hopeful interest, her future prospects. Happily for her real welfare they were not disappointed.

Madame de Cenci was only too thankful to obtain such a companion to soothe her lone hours of suffering. And in a few days from the terrible announcement made by Lord Deloraine to his supposed daughter, she had quietly moved the actual necessities that belonged to her, and without accepting one shilling of the bounty he had proffered her, she left the stately mansion and the hard, stern lord, and set forth on her new and untried career.

Which was to be most envied—the harsh, revengeful, high-born, wealthy peer, or the penniless, humble outcast from his doors? Time would alone show. What was the result of those diverse situations—those differing temperaments?

(To be Continued.)

SOME interesting particulars with regard to the insurance of theatres have lately been published. One house pays £500 a year on insurance against fire, and many others, no doubt, nearly as much. Singularly enough, the theatre which cost by far the largest sum to erect is the only house not insured. This theatre is Drury Lane, which, including the purchase of the old "patent," cost the almost incredible sum of £400,000.

It is no secret that the Prince of Wales is retrenching. Like so many other gentlemen, he has felt the pinch of the agricultural depression, and the reduction of the rents upon his various estates will necessarily diminish his income. The Prince has just sold his yacht, thus effecting a considerable saving.

BARON DE ROTHSCHILD has bought Desbrousse's celebrated house at the corner of the Avenue Marigny, and is going to pull it down to extend the splendid park which surrounds his new residence in the Rue du Cirque. The garden will cost him about £100,000, and is not an acre large.

As some misapprehension appears to exist with regard to the attestation of recruits for the Infantry of the Line, under the new Army Discipline and Regulation Act, it is to be distinctly understood that any man not offering for general service is to be attested for a specific brigade. For the present, all cases of men in Her Majesty's regular forces desirous of re-engaging or continuing their services are to be submitted to His Royal Highness for approval.

An appeal is being made on behalf of the troops who will have to winter at Cabul. Persons having newspapers and magazines to spare are asked to send them for the use of the hospitals and soldiers' reading-room. They should be addressed to Surgeon-Major Porter, principal medical officer of the Cabul field force, via Jellalabad.





[AN OFFER OF MONEY.]

## LINKED LOVES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clarice Villiers; or, What Love Feared."

### CHAPTER VII.

#### IS IT THE ROCKETS?

She struck where the white and fleecy waves  
Looked soft as carded wool;  
But the cruel rocks they gored her side  
Like the horns of an angry bull. LONGFELLOW.

By the murmur which ran around the little group of fishermen Valentine understood that all there agreed with the old spokesman that it was impossible to afford aid to those on board the ill-fated "Osprey." The admiral too had relinquished his fruitless appeals to the men, and stood silent, save for the deep groans which at intervals convulsed his broad chest.

As the old sea-dog stood on the dank shingle, with his grand storm-beaten front and tear-wet, sightless eyes upturned to the lurid lightning-lit heavens, while the fierce winds tossed his sparse locks into a hoary aureole around his bare head, he looked the very personification of desolation.

To his arm clung Winefrede in a helpless despair alternating with wild throbs of keenest agony for the brother who would ere long be slain before her very eyes. But even the stoniness and outward calm of the old man and the girl were not possible to Valentine.

It was the first time in life that he had stood face to face with death—not his own death, for that he could have met bravely and quietly, but the fate of a score of his countrymen who were cooped up in the frail craft which was heeling and plunging like a blind mad animal through the inexorable sea, and head on towards the relentless reef.

Above the crackling, thunderous roar he heard in imagination the agonised diapason of men's appealing voices calling upon him—he who stood there in safety—for needful succour. Ponsonby was young, and had not yet been steeled to look on unmoved when men die. His heart burned within him with a mad passion for action.

Oh! that he could do something—he knew not what. He longed for action of any sort, however little of hope it held. But to stand there waiting for the end! That he felt he could not do. The young man's hands clasped and unclasped convulsively; his teeth fixed themselves in the nether lip until the blood spirted out, and bitter cold as was the storm-wind Valentine was bathed in perspiration. Suddenly the low-murmuring voices of the group broke out in a wild chorus of exclamations.

"She's struck!" "She's on the Pikehead Reef!" "It's all over with the 'Osprey!'" "Heaven be merciful to Master Oscar and the men!"

And the shrill shrieks of women rang out too irrepressible and heard even through the dim of the elemental war. Some were the voices of those whose dear ones were in the fated craft. For there could be no shadow of doubt now that the "Osprey" had reached her last berth.

All there had snatched one awful glimpse, by a blaze of almost insufferable steel-blue lustre which flooded the piled-up thunder-clouds, of the yacht plunging into a great vortex of churning billows, then with her bow raised high on a giant wave in such sort that the beautiful little schooner appeared to stand almost upright on her stern-post, then by an instantaneous movement falling, as the great wave slid from under her, on the fell bristling points so well locally named the Pikehead Reef.

The old admiral was spared such sight, whose like he had witnessed many times in his long and adventurous life; but the outcries and groans told him all too surely that the end had

come, and the Pikehead Reef had been familiar to him from earliest boyhood. He dropped upon his knees on the strand.

"Let us pray Heaven for mercy on their souls," he said, in a deep and solemn voice.

Winefrede, sobbing bitterly, knelt beside him on the sand, covered thick with wet, slimy sea-wrack. Nor were the hardy, weather-beaten fishermen, most of whom were imbued with the fervid piety of their race, slow to follow her example. But there was one there who, unmannered as he was by the wild excitement of a scene so strange to him, yet kept in mind the grand old French proverb, "Aide toi et Ciel t'aidera." ("Help thyself and Heaven will help thee.") It was Valentine Ponsonby.

"Get up, Owain. In a case like this the man who works best prays best. We may save your young master and the other brave men yet."

The gaunt old Welshman sprang to his feet as if galvanised.

"And how iss that to be done?" he asked, simply.

"Is not Morddenau a life-boat station?"

"Yes, and inteed it iss. But what then, Mr. Ponsonby? Do you think they do be able to row the life-boat six miles through this sea? Ah, no, in good truth, they cannot. Or wass it that you think they can bring her by land along our coast?"

"No, I am not so mad, Owain. But they keep something at the coast-guard station beside the life-boat."

A light seemed to break upon the old man.

"Iss it the rockets?"

"Yes, the rockets."

"Ah, and inteed the rockets do be very useful at times. But then see now, to do good the rockets must be here. Yes, inteed! and they are not."

"I will fetch them."

"And how will you do that, Mr. Ponsonby?"

"Which is the best horse in the stable?"

"And in truth the red roan mare, Vixen. Yes, inteed she iss the best."

"Good! I will have her saddled and be on the road in five minutes."

Then approaching the admiral, the young man cried, cheerily:

"There may yet be hope, Sir Cynric. I will take Vixen and ride for life and death to Morddenau for the rocket apparatus."

The old man arose and clutched Valentine's arm convulsively.

"Go!" he cried, "the idea is worthy of you. Would that some of us had thought of it sooner. It is now I fear too late."

"Heaven bless you, Mr. Ponsonby!" ejaculated Winefrede, with a convulsive sob.

But Owain interposed.

"It is not well that Mr. Ponsonby should travel the dangerous road by the cliffs which he do not know at all. No, indeed. I will go. It is useless, let whoever will go. There will not be two timbers left together of the 'Osprey' when he comes back. Ah, me; but I will go."

"No, no, Owain, stay here. Take charge of your master and Miss Glendyr, and if the vessel should break up you may still aid. I am better suited for this errand," and without staying for further remonstrance, Valentine turned and mounted the cliff rapidly.

"He is a brave boy," said old Dinas, and then concentrated his attention again seaward, where the frequent lightning flashes revealed the dark hull of the "Osprey" planted diagonally on the sharp peaks of the Pikehead Reef.

By the vivid recurring lustre not only could the slender spars of the vessel be made out, but the spectators could discern a dark little cluster of forms congregated on the elevated bow, and knew that it was the doomed crew.

As Valentine, who had ascended the steep acclivity to the castle at headlong speed, dashed past the main entrance on his road to the stables, he saw by the red light cast by the smouldering embers of the turret beacon two female forms. They were Mrs. Glendyr and Miss Vanneck. The quick eyes of the governess recognised Ponsonby. He would have passed without speech, but Judith Vanneck left her mistress, and rushing forward, intercepted him.

"The news, Mr. Ponsonby?" she gasped.

"The 'Osprey' has struck!" he answered hurriedly. "Do not tell Mrs. Glendyr. Take her in again; the sight is not for her eyes."

"And you? Was there no aid which a man might render?" There was a subtle intonation of angry contempt in the governess's queries which Ponsonby was far too preoccupied to notice.

"You must not hinder me," he cried excitedly. "It is a case of life and death!"

Judith glanced scornfully after his retreating form.

"I thought better of him," she murmured as she rejoined Mrs. Glendyr. "But it takes more than good looks and pianoforte playing to make a man. Poor Oscar!"

In an inconceivably short space of time Valentine Ponsonby had saddled and bridled the roan mare. She was a magnificent animal, nearly thoroughbred, with sufficient departure from it, however, to ensure her plenty of bone and muscle. Valentine saw, too, at once as he entered the mare's stable that she was not free from vice, for the sloped ears and backward cast eyes, whose dark balls were returned until the whites appeared, gave the young man a speedy inkling of the mare's temper.

But the soothing passage of Valentine's strong soft hand over her crest and mane quieted the animal as by a spell, and she became at once so docile that it would almost have seemed that some subtle instinct told Vixen that the lives of men depended that night upon her good behaviour. What a ride it was! One which Valentine Ponsonby never forgot, and he and peril had not been utter strangers in the past either. He had twelve miles to make on a road unfamiliar to him, mounted on a strange steed and in the darkness and the tempest.

Ponsonby was not a man subject to fear—he had come of the wrong breed for that—and during that night's mad gallop he cast prudence to the winds. In many parts of the route a single

false step of Vixen might have tumbled horse and man sheer over the lofty cliffs, only to be found with the morrow's sun a mangled mass. What of that? What of the lives of a man and a horse when, perhaps, twenty lives hung on the issue of their speed? And Valentine never drew bridle.

Two unspoken prayers were ever in his mind. One was that the "Osprey" might stand the buffeting of the mad waves until his return; the other, that the lightning would come quicker—quicker—quicker! For was it not his sole guider along the pathway of peril?

There was nothing for the party on Caerlan beach but hopeless watching—yes, hopeless utterly, for none there expected that even if Valentine procured the rockets he could return in time to be of use. It was even doubtful whether the keeper of the saving projectiles would render them up to a stranger unfortified by any authority, and the admiral bitterly regretted that he had not at least supplied Valentine with something of the kind.

What a watch it was. For the sightless old admiral, whose daughter's child was soon to be done to death by the cruel, unrelenting billows; for Winefrede, who stood quiet now in a tearless agony; for some of the men and women in that little throng whose best and dearest were so near and yet so utterly beyond the reach of their help. Compared with the terrible ordeal of this waiting for the inevitable end, Valentine Ponsonby's wild night ride was felicity.

The little "Osprey" did credit to the cunning of her builder. Strained in every timber, and stove in under the port quarter, the gallant little yacht still held together. Each time that the levin-brand lit up the seething ocean the watchers reckoned to see but empty, wave-beaten air above the Pikehead Reef; but each time they saw the outline of the little craft, and knew that neither for those on board the vessel nor for themselves was a period yet put to the time of agony and suspense.

Suddenly a shout was heard from the summit of the acclivity beside the castle.

"Ah! see you that now," cried Owain Dinas.

"In good truth, it is Mr. Ponsonby."

In a few moments Valentine had descended and stood the centre of an excited group. He was heavily laden with a case of rockets, some coils of rope and other paraphernalia of rescue.

"We shall want more rope," he cried, scarcely heeding the chorus of congratulation which, led by the admiral and Miss Glendyr, had greeted him. "Can't some of you men supply some?"

On the instant several fishermen ran off towards their homes to procure what quota they could to the appliances for the salvation of the "Osprey."

"The man at the station was ill, Sir Cynric," explained Valentine, hurriedly, "or I would have given him the horse to come on with, for he would understand the management of this apparatus, which I do not."

"Oh, that I could have my sight but for one short half hour!" groaned the admiral.

"Be of good cheer, Sir Cynric. We may be very thankful to Providence that we have the tools—they are seldom given to the hands which cannot use them."

Meanwhile the fishermen had returned with some coils of rope. Valentine opened the case, and by the fitful light of a big horn-lantern made his arrangements.

"We must wait for the next flash," he said.

How long it seemed in coming. But a few brief minutes since and all had prayed that the storm might surcease. Now their aspirations rose to ask that the windows of Heaven might be opened to yield them the blessedness of the lambent light which should direct their efforts.

It came, blindingly, dazzlingly, illumining sea and shore, to be swallowed up as quickly by the jaws of deepest dark. But with a serpent hiss the bright little messenger of mercy shot off in a parabola over the tumult of the greedy green billows with their broken foam crests, shot off

—on—over the "Osprey," and quenched its fire in the waves beyond.

"My range was too great," said Valentine, calmly, as he made ready a second rocket.

It was a strange scene to see amongst that group of toil-worn men, who had met the perils of the deep and conquered them oftentimes, but who yet get stood around helpless now, this slim young stranger take the place of a capable and unquestioned leader.

It is ever so. Mind dominates matter. Napoleon Bonaparte, penniless, starving under-lieutenant of artillery, once showed the whole of France how to win battles, and grizzled veterans fought, bled, died, as the beardless boy willed and dictated. Another flash! Then another fiery messenger sped swift through the murky and spray-swept air.

Hurrah! Was it a cheer that came across the heaving surges? Ay, was it! Those on shore felt that the slender line attached to the rocket became taut. The people on board the "Osprey" had secured its extremity. Gradually, cautiously, Valentine drew the line back shoreward, old Owain Dinas gathering in the slack.

Slowly, slowly, for haste might mar all. Sir Cynric's voice, tremulous with emotion, was raised to inculcate caution. Winefrede's eyes followed the incoming line, seen by the light of the lantern, eagerly, hungrily, for was it not the thread upon which hung her brother's life?

"Hurrah!" cried Owain. "Hurrah!" was echoed by all around.

"Ah! here is the rope!" cried Valentine.

Yes, the whole of the rocket line had been hauled in, and now to its end, secured by one of those capable knots which in direct peril a sailor never forgets to make, was a stout cable. Things went on easily then, although all knew that there was no time to be lost. A guy was rigged up, and in a few minutes those on the beach knew that they were hauling in one of the men whom they yearned to save. He came! A lithe, bright little cabin-boy.

"What Dick Davis!" cried Owain. "Did they send thee first, my lad?"

"Yes, and indeed they did, Mr. Dinas," responded the child. "For the captain he did say that the 'Osprey' she could not hold together many minutes, and he did say we we should go off in 'funeral order'—the youngest and lowest in rank first."

"Then my brother will be lost?" queried Winefrede, in a pitiful voice.

"Yes, ma'am, the captain he will be lost."

"Be calm, Winnie," said Sir Cynric Rhys, "Oscar is quite right. He is a true scion of the old stock. It is thus that an English sailor has always understood his duty, or how should English sailors have ruled the world?"

The old man's voice sounded clarion-clear and proud with the just pride of the race in whose blood the sea salt stirs which bids them claim the realm of the "vexed sea" as the heritage of their daring.

One by one they came—young sailors on whose necks mothers clung and wept happy tears, and thanked Heaven afresh as did our first mother that He had again given each a "man child;" older men on whose spray-wet bronzed cheeks weeping wives pressed thankful kisses. One by one they came.

Then several gentlemen, guests of Mr. Oscar Glendyr, whom he was bringing as visitors to the castle, rather pale and soured looking these, and no impeachment of their manhood either. The last of these was a bearded, stalwart, military-looking man.

"Thank you here for life," he said, in a deep voice, "as agents of that Providence which holds life and death. But be quick, young man," he went on, addressing Valentine. "In three minutes the 'Osprey' parts. I would have remained last, but his lordship and Mr. Oscar Glendyr would not permit it, and, idiots that they are, they are even now wrangling as to who shall stay for the last."

"We will do our best," responded Valentine, quietly.

Another! It was Oscar Glendyr. Winefrede



sprang to him with a glad cry, and the sightless admiral extended his hands.

"Alan would not precede me," he said, in a tone of vexation. "It was useless that we should both throw our lives away, so I left the yacht. But I am disgraced for ever, for he is a lost man!"

Almost as he spoke the taut rope at which Valentine and his eager assistants were hauling with feverish energy slackened suddenly.

"Heaven have mercy upon him!" cried Owain; "the 'Osprey' has gone!"

"Haul in! haul in!" cried the fishermen.

"Gently, my men!" said Valentine, "there is some strange resistance. Ah, good, I remember, Owain, there is a blue light in the rocket case. Quick!"

The next instant a bright radiance streamed far to sea. The "Osprey" had disappeared. Those on shore could trace the rope. It ended at a dark figure clinging like a limpet to a sharp rock some forty yards from shore. Then the fishermen made a sudden movement to haul in. The rope came with a run, but out there in the full swirl of the boiling surges was the dark figure. Valentine Ponsonby threw off his coat and boots and knotted a rope rapidly around his waist.

"Hold on here, Owain!" he cried, "I will save that man or die with him!"

In after days he called those words to mind. Ponsonby was a strong swimmer, and even in that hell of waters accomplished his purpose. Owain heard his hail across the surges and they hauled in. Stumbling up the beach came Valentine, sustaining with difficulty the insensible form of a man. Oscar sprang to him eagerly.

"Is he dead?"

"Oh, no! I think he has hit his head against something. He is certainly living."

"It is Lord Fitzvresci," said Oscar, turning to Winifrede.

Valentine relinquished the insensible form to Owain, saying in a curious voice:

"You can manage. I am very tired. I will go at once to the Castle."

The old man gave a glance from the pale, unconscious face of the form he held up to Ponsonby's flushed countenance.

"Beware of the man whom you have saved from the sea!" he said, urged by some irresistible impulse.

"Never mind old wives sayings, Owain. I have saved—or aided to save—many to-night. I should not expect to find any enemy amongst them!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE RESCUER AND THE RESCUED.

There was a laughing devil in his sneer  
That raised emotions both of rage and fear.

BYRON.

EXISTENCE at Caerlan Castle on the morning succeeding the wreck might have been more endurable for Valentine Ponsonby if he had been possessed of an egregious share of conceit. But vanity was by no means the weakness of Mrs. Glendyr's new manager, and the operation of running the gauntlet of a number of people, all of whose voices are raised aloud in your praise and laudation, is not precisely an agreeable ordeal to a person of moderate modesty.

The frank thanks and cordial hand-grips of the men whom he had so largely aided to save from Oscar Glendyr and Major Ingraham down to the sailors, were grateful to Valentine, and the curt praise of the fishermen, even the more wordy glorification by Owain the garrulous, were fairly endurable. But at Mrs. Glendyr and Miss Vanneck Ponsonby had to draw the line.

After making every allowance for the real feeling of gratitude which could hardly fail to actuate a mother who had thus regained an idolised son, Valentine yet found the incessant flood of Mrs. Glendyr's wordy flattery so distasteful to him that after one experience thereof

he avoided the lady so far as possible with sedulous care.

And as Miss Vanneck appeared desperately inclined to follow her mistress's lead, Valentine pursued the same tactics towards the governess as with regard to Mrs. Glendyr. Indeed, the young man appeared to be singularly obtuse to the markedly gracious advances of a beautiful and clever woman like Judith Vanneck. Perhaps, the congratulations which were of all others most grateful to Ponsonby were those of Sir Cynric Rhys, between whom and himself existed a great and exceeding sympathy.

Up to noon-day Lord Alan Fitzvresci had kept his bed. A couple of the nearest doctors had been summoned on the previous night, for the young man's continued unconsciousness had justified the gravest apprehensions. But it was soon found that the injuries which he had sustained from his rough encounter with the sharp spines of the Pikehead Reef were of a superficial character, and the next day, save for a little debility, the young scion of the peerage was himself again.

It was not until Valentine Ponsonby had borne Fitzvresci safely to land that the young manager knew whom he had saved. His first greeting as he stumbled up the shingly sand free of the breaking billows which seemed angrily to pursue their lost prey, was the sinister and ominous reference made by Owain to the popular belief in the danger of rescuing a drowning man. Then, as Oscar Glendyr and the others crowded round, Valentine learned the name and style of the last of the rescued.

The old steward was the only man who noted that at that moment a strange expression crossed Ponsonby's visage—an indefinable look filled his eyes—products, the old man thought, of excitement and fatigue.

The afternoon was wearing on when Valentine, who had secluded himself in one of his rooms, fitted up as half study, half office, was informed by the old steward that Lord Fitzvresci would be glad if the manager could accord him the pleasure of an interview.

Valentine assented with alacrity, and proceeding to his lordship's rooms was ushered in by Owain. The occupant of the chamber rose slowly and with some difficulty, and saluting Ponsonby courteously invited him to be seated.

Alan, Viscount Fitzvresci, the son and heir of the Earl of Auriol, was a slight but well-knit man of rather below the middle height, with a face handsome in outline but so dark of complexion and so severe in expression as to create an impression that it was the index of a stern and haughty temper.

The same characteristics also caused Lord Fitzvresci to look much older than his actual years, which numbered about thirty. A soldier by profession, the viscount had seen much service; was senior captain of his regiment, and was highly esteemed for his military acquirements; but not regarded with strong personal affection, which, indeed, his cold, proud, self-possessed and undemonstrative manner at once repelled.

"Allow me to tender you my grateful thanks, Mr. Ponsonby, for the service you have rendered. I suppose all on board the 'Osprey' owe the preservation of their lives to you; but I may be said to be more particularly indebted to your personal efforts for the preservation of mine, and, as I have said, I am truly grateful."

There was a curious, eager look on Ponsonby's face as he leaned forward and replied in a few well-chosen words disclaiming modestly any thanks. There was an ardour in the young man's face, an empressment in voice, which seemed to cause the viscount to assume a very pronounced staidness. Evidently he already began to regard his preserver as a man to be cautiously kept at a distance.

"I do not know that I cling to life more than other men," he said, slowly, and with an air akin to indifference. "But I am still a young man, and it has no doubt some pleasures in store for me. So, as I have said, I thank you for your brave act. But thanks are words only. You must let me evince my gratitude in some more solid form."

Valentine stretched out his hand deprecatingly.

"I am more than rewarded by your thanks," he said.

"No, no, I cannot allow myself to be content with offering them alone. What can I—"

"Let us speak no more of this, my lord!" cried Valentine, with heightening colour.

"Ah, but we must. To deal frankly with you, Mr. Ponsonby, let me say I have never remained under an obligation to any man in my life—never! Of course, I must be now and ever under one to you, for it is not possible that I can render you any equivalent service. But I can I hope find some way—do not be afraid," (for Valentine was on the point of breaking in with an energetic disclaimer). "You surely do not suppose that I am about to make any proffer that may hurt your feelings. But my father has great influence. If you can point out any way in which I can make that subserve your interests I shall thank you better than if you permit me to remain as now so greatly your debtor."

There was no emotion in the quiet, level tones, no softening of the stern face as Lord Fitzvresci thus nakedly and cynically avowed that his pride would not permit him to acknowledge benefits bestowed by his fellow man. Ah, man of the world as he was, how little he knew of humanity.

It is not given to the haughtiest son of earth to dis sever himself from the thousand links which bind him to his fellows by debts for innumerable acts, small perchance and unrecognised—of kindness and of love.

"My lord," said Valentine Ponsonby, in a saddened voice, "I beg you will not hold yourself under any debt to me for doing an act of simple humanity which any of the fishermen around me would have done with equal readiness. I thank you for your kindness, but my path in life is chosen and I require no aid. There is one—only one reward which I could ask."

"And that is?"

"Your friendship."

"Mr. Ponsonby!"

The iciness of the viscount's utterance of the young manager's name, the expression of surpassing hauteur, the lifted eyebrows, united to assure Valentine of the enormity of the sin he had committed. And, indeed, Lord Fitzvresci had considerable cause for surprise and even anger at a proposition of so audacious a character.

"Enough, my lord," said Valentine. "Forgive me, I see my folly. Good-morning," and the young man left the room abruptly. "Am I mad that I suggested a friendship between us," he thought, as he passed along the corridor. "Why should I thus be drawn to him? He is cold, haughty, stern, and unloveable. Heavens, how great the likeness is! The very tones of his voice are the same. Is it possible that I can teach that ice to melt? I will not fail for want of trial, but I must approach him cautiously. To see him meet me on terms of friendship would be my highest aspiration, for my heart yearns to him. Surely in this meeting—this rescue, I can see the finger of fate."

The meditations of the man whom Valentine had left ran in quite another channel.

"Insufferable cad!" he muttered, "to imagine that the fact of his having saved my life would give the right to thrust his vulgar company upon me, in order, I presume, that he should vapour amongst his low companions of his intimacy with a Fitzvresci. It's confoundedly unlucky that I was not dragged out by one of the fishermen, as he says, for then a handful of bank-notes would have squared the account. But I'll find some way of managing this one."

For the next few days the castle was in festive array. Lord Fitzvresci, entirely recovered, took his place in the gay company, and at once devoted himself to Miss Glendyr with a persistence and intention which gave the young lady's mother huge satisfaction.

The prospect of her daughter one day playing the part of Countess of Auriol was a pleasant one to the lady of Caerlan, to whom

after the wont of untitled English match-making mammas an aristocratic alliance for their children is the highest felicity of life. But Winefrede Glendyr did not seem to share in this view of the matter, or if she did, her conduct gave no clue to the fact.

She appeared remarkably indifferent to her new admirer, and even avoided him on all occasions when it was possible so to do. To Judith Vanneck, who watched her pupil closely and keenly, this fact occasioned no little surprise. She had imagined that Winefrede's proud nature would have felt the delicate flattery implied in the homage of a man even prouder than herself. But this view did not seem to be borne out by the facts.

Valentine Ponsonby took a certain share in the balls and parties of which Caerlau Castle was for the time the almost nightly scene. Mrs. Glendyr insisted upon his presence, and Sir Cynric told the young man that some relaxation was demanded by the severe nature of his duties.

It cannot be said, however, that the young man derived much pleasure from his participation in the gay assemblies. He had not made any slightest step in Lord Fitzvessi's good graces, that gentleman maintaining the same invariable icy and distant manner towards him. And it was not long before Valentine discovered that although his presence in salon or ball-room brought him no pleasure, it was quite capable of giving pain, and attacking him upon a side on which he did not know that he was vulnerable.

(To be Continued.)

## PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

### THE DRAMA.

#### ADELPHI THEATRE.

A MATINEE has been given at the Adelphi Theatre for the purpose of introducing to the public Miss Elaine Verner, a young aspirant for histrionic fame, who has pursued her studies under the competent guidance of Mr. George Neville. The play selected was Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," and the choice was not altogether inappropriate, for Miss Verner—spite of the timidity, which was perfectly natural under the circumstances—displayed much talent and aptitude for her task. When Miss Verner has acquired greater experience and more complete control of her natural gifts she will become an acquisition to the stage. Miss Verner's face is not wanting in expression.

She made some good points, and her beautiful dark eyes helped to enhance the good impression, and to make the audience fancy it was a real Italian maiden who stood before them. Her voice is not powerful, but it is of musical quality, and in the balcony scene the young lady modulated it so as to give due effect to the wondrous lines she has to speak. There is no royal road to histrionic fame, and, even where talent is present, time, labour and study must be given ere the giddy height can be climbed. Mr. Charles Harcourt, as Mercutio, acted in his customary finished manner. Mr. E. H. Brooke also deserved commendation for his impersonification of Romeo. To Mr. James Fernandez special compliments were also paid for his admiral rendering of the Friar. Mr. C. H. Stephenson was a vigorous Capulet, and Mr. A. C. Hutton imparted the requisite energy to the character of the fiery Tybalt.

#### IMPERIAL THEATRE.

SHERIDAN's famous comedy, "The Rivals," has been enjoying a very merry run here; but Farquhar's celebrated comedy, "The Beaux' Stratagem," has been again placed in the bills. It was with this, it may be remembered, Miss

Marie Litton commenced the season at the end of September. Mr. Clement Scott's original prologue to the play is again to form part of the entertainment, and it was spoken by Mrs. Stirling with all that point and emphasis which marked its first delivery. All goes briskly and smoothly, and the performance affords evident satisfaction and delight.

Miss Litton was once more the admired of all present in her charmingly piquant rendering of Mrs. Sullen, all her speeches being delivered with an amount of freshness and archness that proved positively delightful, abundant honours awaiting her in the rendering of that passage in which the lady who is married to a sot deplores her unhappy lot, sighs for the pleasures of life in town, and criticises the poets, and the painters, and philosophers who have pretended to depict the joys of existence in the country. Miss Ellen Meyrick as Dorinda again won deserved favour; and Miss Pressenger, in place of Miss Carlotta Addison, acted prettily, if not forcibly, as Cherry, the maid of the inn, and went through "Love's Catechism" in a way that won hearty appreciation. Mrs. Stirling's Lady Bountiful was, of course, a most finished and admirable embodiment; and Miss E. Miller left not the slightest cause for complaint as Gipsy.

THE comedy Mr. Byron is writing for Mr. Toole is to be called "The Upper Court," and will be ready in a few days.

### CHILDHOOD'S HOPES.

WAIT till I grow up a man, mother,  
And see the grand things I'll do,  
Working all day for father,  
Dear old granny and you.  
The time, it seems so distant,  
When I shall grow strong and tall,  
Big enough to earn my living,  
And something besides for all.

Barely a youth and granny  
Lies in her silent grave,  
Father, too, lost on the ocean  
Under the surging wave.  
Only you that is left me,  
Mother, dear, ne'er to part,  
I feel I am not forsaken,  
For I hold you near my heart.

Just on the verge of manhood,  
Twenty, turned to-day,  
And the last hope I cherished  
Has flittingly passed away.  
Mother, with granny, is lying  
In the old churchyard grey.  
I've planted sweet flowers o'er them,  
But for father can only pray.

But soon we shall join together  
In that bright home above,  
I read it in the calm blue skies,  
Lit with their smile and love.  
Father and mother and granny,  
I see each one's loving face,  
And live in the hope to join them  
Sustained by His love and grace.

O. P.

### FUSSY PEOPLE.

THE best housekeeper is the woman who does her work quietly, without making her cares the theme of conversation from morning till night. The fussy housekeeper is a wearisome person to live with. She has specialities and whims and notions. Her plumage is always ruffled, her manner is always agitated, she is in a perpetual stew, and unfortunately never gets quite "done" till the last quiet sleep overtakes her. The worst of it is that these fussy folks always persuade themselves and try to persuade others that they

are accomplishing a great deal by their fussiness, which is only true in that they make total destruction of all peace and comfort within the limits of their petty sovereignty.

Now there is a great deal to be done in every household, however small, and it can be done, all of it, without any fuss at all. The whole operation of house cleaning can be gone through with by disturbing one room at a time, while the rest of the house is kept in its usual order. It is foolish to keep the house disarranged for weeks together. If the housekeeper would be a home-keeper as well, she must avoid fussiness. The home is infinitely more than the house, and there is such a thing as destroying the home by what is supposed to be the very perfection of house-keeping.

The most immaculate of housekeepers are not always the most lovely of women, for they allow household cares to narrow the mind and quench the intellect. In proportion as a woman is fussy is she inefficient. The efficient woman has an eye for the main chances and never sacrifices them to side issues. The fussy woman is for ever pattering over non-essentials and of course is for ever behindhand with the essentials. Until she overcomes her tendency to fussiness she can neither be prompt, efficient nor serene.

### NO BOOKS.

IN furnishing your house, don't forget books. To go to housekeeping without a family Bible and an unabridged dictionary ought to be elected a criminal offence. Here lies the beginning of wisdom. Then we should add modern history to ancient, poetry to science, Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Hawthorne, and Holmes to theology. We should know the opinions of the best minds of to-day upon all questions of social life, of philosophy, of agriculture. We have known famous business men, keen financiers, to grow out of bookless homes, but never the great-hearted and tender-souled. So, parents, remembering this, glance over your libraries to see if there be not some vacancy to fill up with a volume which will add to the cheer of the windy winter nights.

Get for the boy a book of history or travels; for the girl a copy of Tennyson or Longfellow, or Browning—some sweet poet who sings along the quiet vales of life in notes we all can understand! Win them to read aloud around the evening lamp, and most unconsciously their young souls will be drawn out to follow after those who call—to follow, and sing, and be glad—for great is the power of influence.

### A PARALLEL.

THE following extract from Pepy's Diary shows that two centuries ago farmers were unable to pay their rent, and were throwing up their farms under a curiously different state of things from that now prevailing.

"January 1, 1688—Dined with my lord Crewe, with whom was Mr. Browne, Clerk of the House of Lords, and Mr. John Crewe. Here they did talk much of the present cheapness of corn, even to a miracle; so as their farmers can pay no rent, but do fling up their lands; and would pay in corn; but (which I did observe to my lord, and he liked well of it) our gentry are grown so ignorant in everything of good husbandry that they know not how to bestow this corn; which, did they understand, but a little trade, they would be able to joine together and know that markets there are abroad, and send it thither, and thereby ease their tenants and be able to pay themselves."

MR. TURNERELLI states that the Beaconsfield Wreath is not permanently lodged in Madame Tussaud's. "Its destination may be the ocean or the melting-pot, but not Lord Beaconsfield."



## STOP.

STOP, young man! You are in a hurry. That is not the way to do anything well. If you are in a hurry, especially in a very great hurry, sit down and wait a few minutes until you shall have had time to collect your thoughts and to consider how to go to work to accomplish what you have in hand.

A vast amount of labour is lost in this world by people being in haste. They go at an undertaking without any previous reflection how to best accomplish the purpose in hand.

But, it may be answered, sometimes people must hurry—they must hurry at a fire, for instance. It is true, nevertheless, that the woman who threw a looking-glass from the third-story window, because a building in the rear was on fire, might very advantageously have taken a moment for reflection.

Again, it is said that in driving at the highest rate of speed one cannot stop to think. But in nothing is greater coolness required. A nervous, excited driver imparts his nervousness and excitement to the steed, and thus often the race—as in other cases the race of life—is lost.

Stop! Think. Then act, if you want to come out right.

**SINGULAR CASE OF PALSY.**—In the village of Combe in Dorset a woman named Mary Bowden has just passed away at the age of 70, after suffering for half that period from palsy, brought on by fright. This was a rather remarkable case, because during the whole of each day, such was the nature of her nervous malady, she required rocking in a chair. When asleep the motion became unnecessary. For 35 years the patient was thus rocked, and it was not until a quarter of an hour before her death that the palsy left her. She is spoken of as having been patient and resigned.

## UNDER THE SNOW.

HEAVY snow-wreaths bend the cedars,  
Heaped it lies beneath the trees,  
Where in summer naught is stirring  
But the whispering southern breeze.

Vanished is each flower and leaflet,  
Stripped the branches cold and bare,  
With their ghostly arms extending  
In the still and frosty air.

But beneath the cold earth's surface,  
In its warm-lined tiny cell,  
Beats each little heart of nature,  
Waiting patiently and well.

Down in Nature's generous bosom,  
Safe from storm, and wind, and strife,  
Strengthening to be meet for struggle,  
Lie the tiny germs of life.

Not in vain the rain and hailstorm,  
Not in vain the snow and blast:  
He shall bring His patient workers  
Safely through each trial at last.

So we, too, whose hopes are hidden  
Where His eye alone can know,  
Shall soon see our first bright blossoms  
Springing from the melting snow.

## HYACINTHS.

HYACINTHS are admirably fitted for indoor decorations during the winter months. A very small pot will answer for this flower; but some prefer to plant three or four in a large pot, and

this makes a very pretty ornament. Fill the pot with sandy, porous soil; make a space in the soil for the bulb, so that it will be about half below the earth; then press the bulb down so that it will just show its upper surface above the soil; then water, giving all the earth will hold. The pots can now be set away in a cool, dark cellar for several weeks, where they will make roots; the tops will advance but little. By removing a few at a time into a warm, light room, something of a succession can be kept up.

When placed in glasses for winter flowering, the base of the bulb should just touch the water. It will soon evaporate, so that the water is a little below the base of the bulb, and this is as it should be. These too should be set away in a cool place. As soon as flower buds appear, sprinkling the leaves and buds is a benefit; give plenty of light and air and as moist an atmosphere as possible.

## ONLY A GLANCE.

How much is expressed in the glance one woman bestows upon another under certain circumstances! Few observant persons can have failed to notice the manner in which one woman who is not perfectly well-bred or perfectly kind-hearted, will eye another whom she thinks is not in such good society, and above all, not at the time in so costly a dress as she herself is in. It is done everywhere, at parties, at church, in the street. The very servant girls learn it of their mistresses. It is done by women in all conditions of life. It is done in an instant. Who cannot recall hundreds of instances of that sweep of the eye which takes in at a glance the whole woman, and what she has on from top-knot to shoe tie?

Men are never guilty of it, or with such extreme rarity, and then in such feeble and small souled specimens of their sex, that it may be set down as a sin not masculine, or at least epicene. But women of sense, of some breeding, and even of some kindness of nature, will thus endeavour to assert a superiority upon the meanest of all pretences, and inflict a wound in a manner the most cowardly, because it cannot be resented, and admits of no retort. It is a sure sign of meanness of soul.

## ETHEL ARBUTHNOT;

OR,

## WHO'S HER HUSBAND?

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Amy Robsart," "The Bondage of Brandon,"

"Breaking the Charm," &amp;c., &amp;c.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## SIR BRANDON'S WEAKNESS.

For Fanny the colonel was sighing,  
But Fanny continued stone cold.

Hook.

WHEN a man is laid up in a small country house with a sprained ankle, which condemns him to a long period of enforced inactivity, and he is constantly in the society of a very pretty, ladylike and engaging girl, it is not at all surprising if he falls in love with her. This was the case with Sir Brandon Arbuthnot.

The more he saw of Ethel, the more convinced he became that she was just the one young lady in the world that he had all his life been looking for. His pride, however, fought a battle with his heart, for he was afraid that she had no family to boast of, and he did not want to ally his Norman blood with the plebeian current of a country girl about whom he knew nothing.

As usual Ethel came to his room one morning to read to him, and his eyes sparkled with pleasure as she entered. She was carelessly but becomingly dressed in a pale blue morning wrapper. Her hair hung down over her shoulders, and she looked ravishingly beautiful.

"I don't know whether you are acquainted with German," she exclaimed, "but I am very fond of that language myself, and I have brought Goethe's Wilhelm Master. Shall I read in the original, or translate for you?"

"Thank you. I am well up in German literature," he replied, "having been two years at Heidelberg in my youth. Do you know those lines: 'It is better to have loved and lost, than not to have loved at all?'"

"I don't believe in that sentiment," replied Ethel. "If I love I want to retain the object on which I place my affections. The end of love is possession. Platonic affection is an abstract idea which means a sham, and I hate shams as much as Carlyle does."

"Really," said the baronet, "you talk in a very remarkable way for one in your position of life. You must have received a superior education, for you know as much, if not more, than I do."

Ethel smiled faintly at the rather clumsily conveyed compliment.

"I went to a good school," she remarked, "and I have not wasted my time since."

"Was it you I heard playing the piano last night?" he asked.

"It was. I am particularly fond of music. I hope it did not annoy you."

"Not in the least. I am a devoted admirer of music. If I am not mistaken you were playing that difficult symphony in C of Beethoven's. Do you affect classical music?"

"Rather. I sometimes play dance music for children, just as I would walk through Sir Roger de Coverley or a quadrille to please the old people in a party. Shall I begin to read now?"

"Don't read to-day, please," he exclaimed; "let us talk. It will be so much more agreeable to me. Shut up as I am here, I have no one to converse with, and feel sometimes as if I should lose the use of my tongue."

"That would be a pity," said Ethel, closing the book and adding: "What shall we talk about?"

"Yourself."

"I am afraid you will find that a very uninteresting subject."

"Not in the least. I am deeply interested in you. Will you not tell me something about your family? I knew some Simmonses in Warwickshire. Do you belong to them? There was a Captain Simmons in my regiment. He is in the Bengal Presidency now."

"N-no," replied Ethel, hesitatingly, "I don't think I can claim connection with them. I know very little about our pedigree. Those things do not interest me much. Poor papa was a gentleman, and we have a baronet in the family."

"Indeed?"

"You say that as if it was a redeeming feature," she exclaimed. "Papa was always talking about his Norman blood; mamma's family is poor. When we lost my father we kept a shop."

"Dreadful!"

"No, it wasn't. I thought it rather fun to serve behind the counter; and it was quite exciting when I got a good customer who spent a lot of money."

"What—a—what commercial enterprise did you embark in, may I venture to inquire?" said Sir Brandon.

"What line were we in? Oh, snuff, tobacco and cigars; fancy articles, such as pouches, the smoker's companion; caps for smokers; tobacco jars, etc. We had a most complete stock."

"Dear me, fancy a young lady with your accomplishments descending to that. What are you doing now?"

"I abandoned trade for agriculture, and am stewardess and book-keeper to Mr. Thomas Woodruffe."

"Really! I know him well. He is at present in France."

"Yes," said Ethel, carelessly. "I will write to him at Dieppe. He is training some horses there."

"I wondered what made him leave England."

"It was through me."

"Through you?" ejaculated Sir Brandon in some surprise.

"Yes. He was good enough to make me an offer, but I refused him, and the poor fellow went away broken-hearted. Men are such idiots where women are concerned, Sir Brandon."

There was a roguish twinkle in her eye as she said this, but Sir Brandon did not apply the remark to himself, though it was intended for him, and he might have seen that it was intended for him.

"You refused Tom Woodruffe?" he cried. "Why he is a good-looking young fellow, and has an estate worth at least a cool six thousand a year."

"I think I ought to know all about that since I manage it."

"Certainly."

"The fact is I am rather exacting in the matter of men," continued Ethel, "and intend to be very particular who I marry."

Sir Brandon fidgetted uneasily on his chair.

"Perhaps you would not think me good enough?" he exclaimed.

"You, Sir Brandon. What do you mean?" demanded Ethel.

"I mean that I like you; that in fact you are the most amiable and engaging young lady I have ever met. I—I'm a good soldier, and got the Victoria Cross in India, Miss Simmons, but I don't know how to make love. It's want of practice, I suppose, for this is the first time I have tried my hand at it, but you know what I intend to say, don't you?"

"Yes," replied Ethel; "you have made your meaning plain enough."

"It's an awfully blundering way of doing it, you know, and I'm afraid you are not half satisfied."

"Don't apologise."

"I can't even go down on my knees with this confounded leg of mine. Confound it, I'd willingly charge a battery of field guns in position, but when it comes to making love I'm out of the hunt."

"Very sorry, Sir Brandon, but I can't help you," said Ethel.

"You might if you tried meet me half way."

"No. It is one of those things a man must do for himself. Remember the fate of that famous officer, Miles Standish, immortalised by Longfellow."

"Oh, yes, I know; he got another fellow to go and do his courtship, and the other fellow carried off his girl."

"Exactly so."

"Well, I've said all I can, except this, Miss Simmons," exclaimed Sir Brandon. "I love you dearly. Will you be my wife?"

"Oh! Sir Brandon, think of the shop."

"Hang the shop!" he said, impatiently.

"Married people will quarrel occasionally, and when you are angry you will think of your aristocratic origin and throw the shop at me."

"I will not, on my word."

"I couldn't bear to have the shop thrown at me. If you were to light a cigar or take a pinch of snuff when we were bad friends I should think you intended to cast a slur on me," Ethel said.

"But you have a baronet in the family."

"Oh, yes, that is true enough; but if you were to put the shop in one scale and the distinguished relation in the other, I fear that the baronet would kick the beam. No, I don't think I am good enough for you, Sir Brandon."

"You are an angel, my dear Miss Simmons."

"I haven't got wings, so that can't be true. Angels don't eat bread and butter, and I do. Seek a wife in your own circle, Sir Brandon. Mamma and I are only 'vulgar, common people,' and, I assure you, we are proud of it, and don't care a snap of the finger for the baronet."

"Am I to understand that you will not have me for your husband?" he said, biting his lips till they were stained with blood.

"I am sorry to have to inform you, Sir Brandon Arbuthnot, that such is the melancholy fact."

Ethel felt now that her triumph was complete. The baronet had only been in the house a fortnight, and he had made her an offer of marriage which she had frankly refused. Now she had obtained her revenge. He had proposed to the "vulgar person," and been refused.

"You talk in a very gay and flippant tone," he exclaimed, bitterly. "Perhaps you love someone else. In which case it would have been fair of you to tell me."

"I did love a man, but he is dead."

"Then why not have me? I never made a girl an offer before. It is so strange to be refused. I am not old. They say I am not bad-looking. I have a title and a fine property left me by my uncle. Why is it you won't have me?"

"Am I obliged to give you a reason?"

"I should be infinitely obliged if you would."

"Then it is because I don't care enough for you," said Ethel. "I regret extremely that this painful scene should have occurred; but it was not of my seeking. Still, you can console yourself with the line you quoted just now, 'It is better to have loved and lost than not have loved at all.' Excuse me now, Sir Brandon, poor dear mamma is not very well to-day, and I have my domestic duties to attend to."

Sir Brandon Arbuthnot bowed coldly. Never had he felt so much annoyed in his life. His belief in himself was so great that he thought he had only to ask and have. It was his opinion that he was doing Ethel a great favour in offering to marry her, and that she would not appreciate his condescension did not enter into his calculation at all.

It was a bitter mortification for him. As Ethel reached the door she heard a footstep on the stairs and a familiar voice.

"Good heavens!" she muttered, "it is Mr. Clews."

What to do she knew not.

"Don't trouble yourself, ma'am," said the little lawyer. "You say Sir Brandon is upstairs? I'll find my way up. Don't bother about me. Glad to see you looking so well. Front room, is it? All right."

Away he sped, two steps at a time, up the narrow flight of stairs, and there being no way of passing him, and practically no escape, Ethel waited where she was. How her heart fluttered, for she knew that she would be exposed, and that a scene would be the result.

"Why, that is Clews' voice," exclaimed the baronet. "I wondered why he did not put in an appearance sooner after getting my letter. I am glad he is come. I will try and get away from here in a day or two."

"You need not do that," said Ethel. "I am sure you are very welcome."

Sir Brandon had no time to make any reply to this speech, for Mr. Clews hastily entered the room, brushing almost brusquely past Ethel.

"How do, Sir Brandon?" he cried. "Sorry to hear about your accident. Would have been down before, but I had a reference on which kept me too busy to leave town. How is the leg?"

"Getting on very nicely, thank you," said the baronet.

Ethel might have escaped now, but she knew that her little trick was sure to be discovered, and she deemed it best, in the exercise of her discretion, to face the storm at once.

"You did not notice a lady in the room," said the baronet, pointing to Ethel. "Let me introduce you to Miss Simmons."

The lawyer turned round abruptly and looked at Ethel with a puzzled expression.

"Miss—what did you say?" he asked.

"Miss Simmons," repeated the baronet.

"How do you do, Mr. Clews?" said Ethel, smiling. "I am glad to meet such an old friend once more."

The lawyer looked from one to the other in great perplexity.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE ABDUCTION.

One hour of striving hope hath praise  
Beyond a score of hopeless, idle days;  
Forgot not steel is tempered in the fire.

CRABBE.

MR. CLEWS could not understand why Miss Arbuthnot should be introduced to him as Miss Simmons, and the puzzled expression of his face was really comical in the extreme.

"I—I don't quite see the meaning of this joke," he exclaimed.

"Joke!" repeated the baronet. "You seem to know one another. If this lady is not Miss Simmons, who is she?"

"Ethel Arbuthnot," replied Clews.

It was now the baronet's turn to appear astonished, and twisting his long moustache he could not refrain from smiling.

"Miss Arbuthnot!" he exclaimed, recovering himself and mastering his feelings by the exercise of a strong effort, such as all those who belong to the race of Vere de Vere are supposed to be capable of at volition. "Allow me to congratulate you on the admirable way in which you have acted your part."

"Thank you," replied Ethel, who did not at the moment know what to say.

"Believe me, you have mistaken your vocation."

"Do you think so?"

"Oh, yes; you were intended by nature for the stage, and I can assure you that when you vended snuff and tobacco you were wasting your really admirable talents."

Mr. Clews saw that Sir Brandon was trying to be sarcastic and began to get an inkling of the truth.

Eh! What?" he exclaimed. "There has been some mistake here."

"Not much," replied the baronet. "I was brought here after my accident, and I was given to understand that this lady was Miss Simmons, and I may add that I have made a fool of myself while labouring under that impression."

Ethel coloured up at this imputation.

"Allow me to state," she said, "that the conclusion you came to was in no way brought about by my agency."

"Was it not?"

"You saw my housekeeper, servant, or whatever you like to call her. She told you her name was Simmons, and you imagined I was her daughter. If you will be so good as jog your memory, you will find that you never asked me my name, and that I never told you it was Simmons."

"Capital! You would make as good a special pleader as an actress."

"Do you want to insult me in my own house?" asked Ethel.

"Far from it. If I have said anything that would convey that idea, I beg to apologise and immediately withdraw it, only you know I can't help feeling a little sore over what has happened."

"I did not feel under any special obligation to tell you who I was really," remarked Ethel. "The truth is you came here in a peculiar manner, and what you once said to Captain Hammersly about our being vulgar people rankled in my mind."

"So you thought you would pay me out?"

"Precisely."

"My dear Miss Arbuthnot," said Sir Brandon, "I shall send for a carriage and leave your hospitable house this afternoon."

"I have a carriage waiting outside," exclaimed Mr. Clews.

"Very well. I can go with you. Of course after what has taken place to-day it would be embarrassing for me to stay here."

"Yes, it would; I perfectly understand that," replied Ethel.

"May I add that I am still in earnest, and that I am willing to make the same offer to Miss Ethel Arbuthnot that I did to the imaginary Miss Simmons."



"Miss Arbuthnot returns the same answer that Miss Simmons did."

The baronet bowed with well-bred ease. Deeply mortified as he was he would not allow himself to show it.

Ethel went downstairs and joined her mother, to whom she related all that had occurred, and the worthy lady could scarcely conceal her annoyance at Ethel's independence.

"Well, my dear," she said, "I suppose you know best, you are old enough anyhow to do so, but I will say this, never in my life did I see a girl throw chances away as you do. Charles Palethorpe, poor fellow, is dead and gone, Herbert Gordon you say you can't bear, Tom Woodruffe you won't have. What do you want, and what are you going to do?"

Ethel took up some knitting she had done in the morning and began to tear it to pieces.

"I don't know," she replied, with her eyes cast down.

"Look at the future. You will not be always young," urged her mother.

"Mamma, I am drifting with the tide, and I scarcely care what becomes of me. My heart was broken once when I found out what a wretch Herbert was, and again it was broken when Charles died. I want time to recover myself."

"But the baronet, my dear, think of him. Wouldn't you like once more to be mistress of Oak Hall?"

"Yes," replied Ethel, musingly; "I must confess I should, but Sir Brandon Arbuthnot is so proud and conceited that he really thinks he is conferring a favour on me when he asks me to marry him. Now I cannot get down on my knees and say 'thank you' to any man who asks me to be his wife. I have such a good opinion of myself that I consider I confer the obligation on him."

There was a noise on the stairs again, and this time Sir Brandon was seen descending leaning on the shoulders of Mr. Clews. Looking in the parlour, he said:

"Good-bye, ladies, I am going away."

"Oh, Sir Brandon, I am so sorry!" exclaimed Mrs. Arbuthnot, effusively.

"Many—very many thanks for your kindness. My man will call for the few things I have left upstairs. And if there is any charge—"

Ethel interposed angrily.

"I do not think you need insult us by supposing that we should make any," she exclaimed.

"Well, you know I would rather not be under an obligation, Miss Arbuthnot."

"It is precisely for that reason that I wish to put you under one."

"Well," he continued, twisting his moustache, "I shall tell Clews to give you a cheque for what is due, and if you don't like to accept it you know you can send it to the poor box. Good-bye."

Ethel sank into a chair, red in the face, and muttered "Insolent" as he got into the carriage with the help of the lawyer.

"What can you expect, my dear child, you have brought it all on yourself," said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

"I hate him," replied Ethel.

Having put the baronet in the carriage, Mr. Clews returned to wish the ladies farewell, as we know he had a sincere regard for both the mother and daughter.

"This is a very funny adventure," he said, "I must come and see you and talk it over; the baronet is completely non-plussed."

"When will you come?" asked Ethel.

"This evening. I'll take him to an hotel. Of course he can't stop here after what has occurred, and his ankle is decidedly better, he can walk with assistance. I think he wanted to make himself out worse than he really was for the sake of the beautiful Miss Simmons—eh?"

Ethel smiled.

"I had to have my revenge on him when circumstances delivered him into my hands," she exclaimed.

"Don't blame you, my dear, don't blame you

a bit," replied Mr. Clews, shaking her hand warmly. "You're too good for him—too good for any of them."

"Oh, no, you flatter me!"

"Do I? If I wasn't an old man—but there, I'm out of the question, still he is the baronet and has all the property."

Ethel shook her head.

"No," she said, "my hand shall never go without my heart. If Sir Brandon ever makes me his wife he will have to win me. I am not like a ripe plum ready to fall down at the first shake of the tree."

"Excellent," said little Mr. Clews, rubbing his hands. "What a girl you are."

"I am a woman, Mr. Clews, and I hope I have the respect for myself which every member of my sex ought to have."

"Certainly, very proper. Well, I shall be here this evening. Ha! ha! can't help laughing at the poor baronet. It's the best joke I ever heard of in my life. Ha! ha! Good-bye, my darling, if you will allow an old man to call you so."

"Always. That is your privilege, Mr. Clews."

"Then I think I'll steal a kiss," he said.

"That is going a little too far," she replied, coquettishly.

"What! Not just one wee tiny one on the cheek? I must have it. So," he exclaimed, kissing her. "Heaven bless you, my child. I can see into the future as well as most people, and I can see we shall have a happy issue out of all our afflictions before long."

Saying this he hurried away and jumped into the carriage, which was rapidly driven off over the country road in the direction of Morecombe. Ethel flattered nervously with her foot as if her mind was at ease.

"Another chance gone," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, sulkily.

"Really, mamma," replied Ethel, "you seem very anxious to get me off your hands. We are comfortable and contented here; we have enough to live upon, and if I do not grumble, you might be satisfied."

"But how much better off we might be."

Ethel stamped on the floor impatiently, and was about to make a remark of an angry nature when the sound of wheels grating on the macadam was heard.

"Another visitor," exclaimed Mrs. Arbuthnot, "or is it Sir Brandon come back?"

Ethel arose and looked out of the window.

"Neither," she replied, as the carriage stopped at the door. "It contains two strangers. Stay! One face is familiar to me. It is the gipsy who lives in the mine. What is the meaning of this?"

She was not long left in suspense, for Edward Charrington stepped out of the carriage and entered the house.

"Is this lady Miss Ethel Arbuthnot?" he asked, looking at Mrs. Arbuthnot and pointing to Ethel.

"Yes, sir, that is my daughter Ethel."

"Ah! I am very sorry, but it will be my painful duty to take you away with me."

Ethel turned pale.

"What do you mean, sir?" she asked.

Mr. Charrington was about to reply when a cry was heard outside, and they all looked out of the window. Ezra, the gipsy, had hold of a woman by the arm, and he was beating her about the head with his fist. It was his wife, Madge.

"Come here to spoil me, will you?" he exclaimed. I thought I taught you a lesson yesterday. You stole out of the mine to come here and warn the girl; but I was too smart for you. Wasn't that enough for you?"

"No," replied the woman Madge. "You half killed me, you brute; but I am here to do my duty."

"What's that?"

"To tell Miss Arbuthnot that you are going to carry her off to France on a false certificate of insanity. Beware, Miss Ethel—beware!"

Ezra cut short her cries by striking her a heavy blow in the face which cast her senseless on the grass.

"Take that for your meddling," he exclaimed. "I won't have no woman interfering with me. Yesterday I knocked you silly, and to-day I hope I have finished you."

It was the last effort of poor Madge. She had started to warn Ethel of her impending danger the night before, as soon as she learned the project in which her husband had embarked with Mr. Charrington, but he had suspected and followed her. An altercation had arisen between them, and she had been so badly beaten that she was unable to move for some hours.

Ezra dragged her back into the mine and kept watch over her. As soon as she left and got into the carriage she remembered it and arrived just in time to warn Ethel, but did no good to herself or her friend.

The cruel blow which Ezra had dealt her covered her with blood and completely stunned her. At that moment if the hard-hearted wretch had killed her he would not have cared. Mrs. Arbuthnot was terribly alarmed, for she recognised in a moment the danger in which her daughter was placed.

"Of course, sir," she said, addressing Charrington, "you have some authority for what you are doing?"

"Most assuredly, ma'am," replied he. "I am a doctor and proprietor of a madhouse. Look at these certificates, duly signed by two medical men. They declare that Miss Ethel Arbuthnot is mad, and my instructions are to take her away and place her in proper confinement."

Mrs. Arbuthnot looked over the papers, and, as far as she could see, they were legal documents, properly drawn up and duly signed.

"There must be some mistake," she said. "Perhaps there is some other Ethel Arbuthnot."

"My instructions are very precise and accurate. I can assure you there is no mistake," replied Charrington.

Ethel stood like a statue chiselled out of fine Carara marble, so white and motionless was she.

"Come, young lady," continued Charrington, "my duty is a painful one, but I must carry it out. Dress yourself for the journey."

Ethel drove back a choking sob and spoke tremulously.

"Heaven knows I am not mad," she said. "There is some horrible mystery in this. I am the victim of a base conspiracy. Oh! do not take me away."

"I cannot help it. If you refuse to come quietly, I must use force."

He seized her rudely by the arm.

"Is there no help?" she gasped, in deadly terror.

Mrs. Arbuthnot sank fainting on the sofa, for she was completely overpowered.

"None," replied Charrington. "Will you come or not? No one can hear your cries. The house is isolated, and who would help a suspected lunatic? You are completely in my power, and it will be best for you to make no fuss."

"Heaven is merciful," said Ethel. "It cannot permit this outrage to be successfully accomplished. I will hope for a rescue. Release me, sir. I will accompany you."

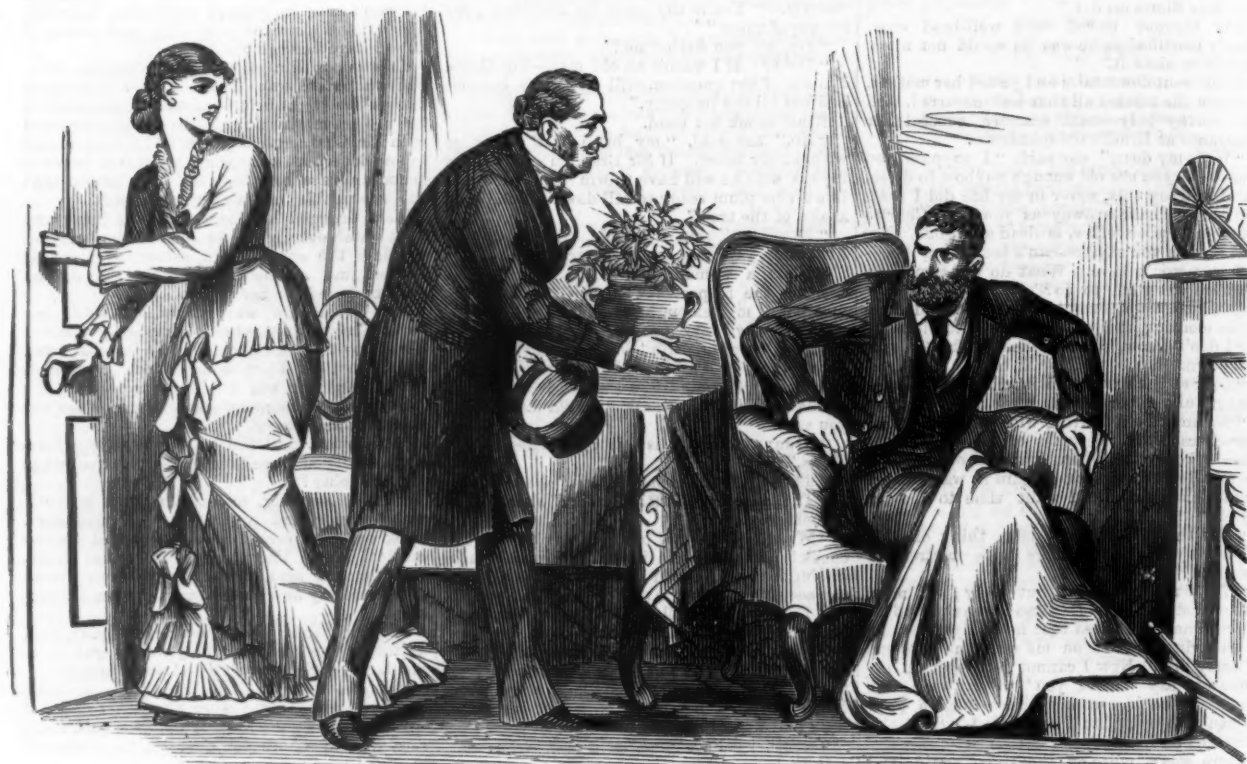
She took up and put on a hat and jacket and kissed her mother.

"Inform Mr. Clews of this, mamma," she exclaimed, but received no answer. It was doubtful if the old lady heard her. "Now, sir, I am ready," she added.

Charrington offered his arm to conduct her to the carriage. She indignantly refused it, and walked to it herself with as much queen-like courage as Marie Antoinette of France displayed when she went to the scaffold and saw the hideous knife of the guillotine over her devoted head.

Charrington followed her in and took a seat by her side, while Ezra jumped on the box. They were driven rapidly away. Mrs. Simmons wrung her hands on the threshold and Madge lay like one dead on the blood-stained grass. It was like a dream, all had happened so suddenly and unexpectedly.

Ethel's heart sank within her, because the



[THE LAWYER'S VISIT.]

danger in which she was placed was so dark and impenetrable. She could only guess that she was abducted by the orders of Herbert Gordon, but there could be no certainty in the conjecture.

It was in vain that she appealed to Charrington for information, he was as mute as a stone and would answer no questions whatever; all he would say was that in a few hours she would arrive at her destination and then she would know everything.

The station was reached, tickets purchased, and they waited for the up-train. Ezra and Charrington never quitted her side. She was as jealously watched as a prisoner by his gaoler.

She could not restrain her tears, which fell fast, and her evident distress attracted the attention of a gentleman who looked curiously at her.

"Oh, sir!" she exclaimed. "Do please help me?"

"What is the matter?" asked the gentleman.

Charrington smiled significantly, and tapped his forehead to convey the idea that she was wrong in her head.

"I have been carried away from my home by those men, sir," replied Ethel. "They say I am mad, but it is false."

Charrington produced the certificates and allowed the gentleman to glance over them, and when he had finished he shook his head.

"Very sorry," he said, "but I cannot interfere. Mad people always say they are not insane. You will be well treated, I am sure, where you are going, and you must learn to look upon your keepers as your friends and not your enemies. If you have any complaint to make, the lunacy laws are effectually administered by commissioners who come round at stated intervals."

"But," exclaimed Ethel, shivering, "I am perfectly sane, and have been carried off in broad daylight without the shadow of an excuse."

"Impossible! Such things cannot be done in a free country like England."

With this remark the gentleman turned on his heel, and Ethel was met by a contemptuous smile from Charrington.

"It won't work," he observed, "so you need not try it on again. Be cheerful, and talk to me as if I was your brother."

"I should be very sorry to have such a brother," replied Ethel, bestowing upon him a look of withering scorn.

The train came up at this juncture and they got into a first-class carriage which the guard for a consideration of a pecuniary nature reserved exclusively for them. It is useless to dwell upon the incidents of the journey. After her vain appeal at the station, Ethel gave herself up to stolid despair, and did not again attempt to excite pity. She found that you have only to say that a person is mad for everyone to take it for granted that such is the fact.

It was late at night when the steamer, after a stormy passage across the Channel, reached Dieppe, and she was driven along a country road she knew not whither, but it was a relief to her to know that her journey was nearly at an end, and that she would soon have her doubts removed. If she only knew what she had to encounter she felt that she could face the situation with greater fortitude. It was the surprise and uncertainty into which she was plunged that made a coward of her.

The night was very dark, and though she looked out of the window she could not distinguish the trees which grew by the road side. Suddenly there was a terrific crash, and the carriage was turned over on its side. It had evidently collided with another vehicle.

Neither Ethel nor Charrington were hurt, though the latter cut his hand slightly by the broken glass of one of the windows. Voices were heard in loud altercation. The drivers swore at each other in voluble French. The horses plunged and kicked. It was a scene of confusion. Charrington opened the door and helped Ethel out.

"I hope you are uninjured," he remarked. "Only frightened," she replied. "But I am getting used to that."

A gentleman approached with a lantern or lamp in his hand.

"Hold on to the horses, Jim," he cried, "never mind the trap. I was on my right side and I'll get the name and address of this clumsy French Jehu, and make him pay for the damage."

Ethel thought she knew the tone of the voice.

Her heart fluttered strangely, and a film came over her eyes.

Suddenly the light from the lamp flashed in her face, and the person who held it cried:

"What is this? Is it Miss Arbuthnot, I see?"

She attempted to rush forward and throw herself in his arms, but Charrington, stifling a curse between his lips, restrained her.

"Oh, Mr. Woodruffe," she cried, "save me—save me!"

"From what?" he asked.

"I have been carried off from England and brought here for some base purpose. For Heaven's sake, as you are a gentleman, save me!"

"Why, of course I will," answered Tom Woodruffe, for it was his carriage that had been run into. "Release that lady, sir."

Charrington began to feel extremely uncomfortable, and looked round for Ezra, who had just extricated himself from a temporary bed which a ditch had provided him with.

"Brain this fellow!" cried Charrington.

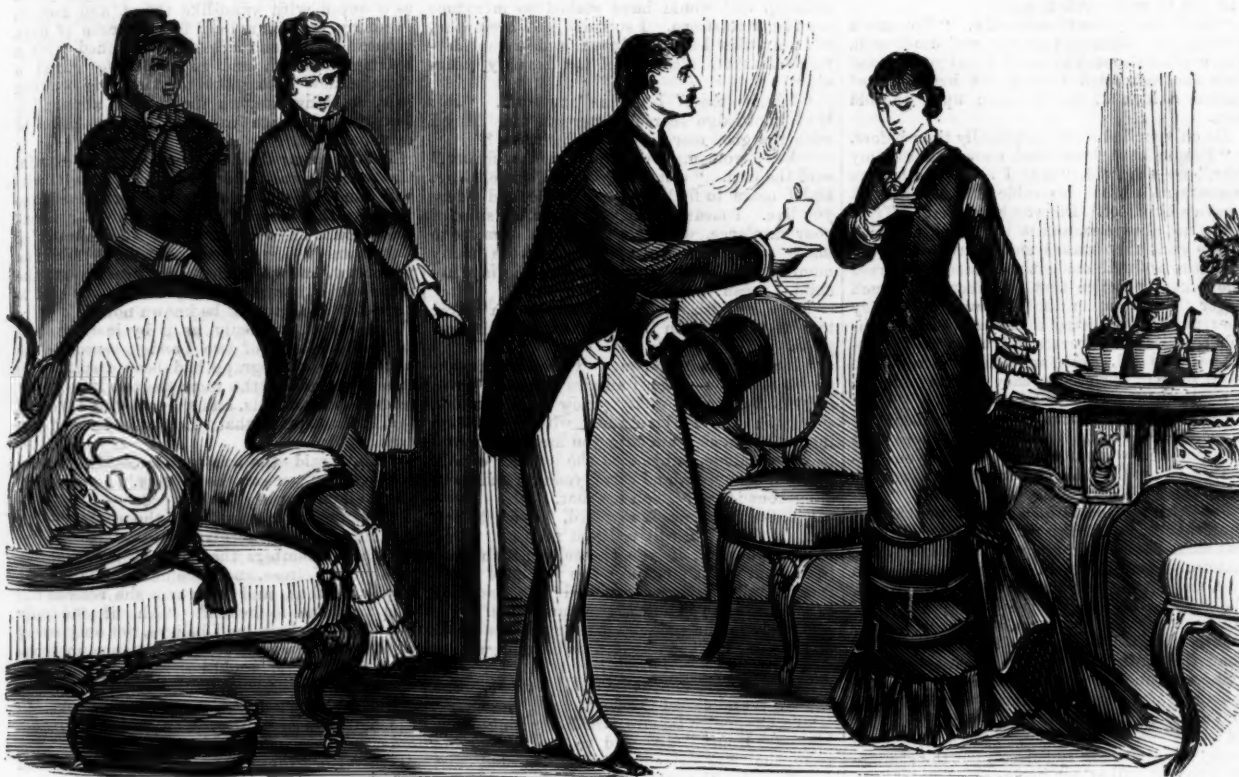
The gipsy crept up behind Tom, and dealing him a blow with a bludgeon laid him prostrate on the ground.

Ethel saw her last hope vanish, and utterly forlorn, fell back insensible in Charrington's arms.

Her overwrought nerves had given way, the reaction had come, and she could bear no more.

(To be Continued.)





[AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.]

## UNDER A LOVE CHARM;

OR,

### A SECRET WRONG.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"**"The Mystery of His Love; or, Who Married Them?" &c., &c.*

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

AN OGRE.

"A memory wakes up in my soul—  
Of days long past and dead—  
A mournful tale. Recite the whole,  
My ears are dull," the old man said.

VERY leering and disagreeable eyes were the old gentleman's. He had a gold-rimmed glass stuck into one; he smiled; his white false teeth gleamed like the tusks of a wild boar; not a pleasant nor a graceful smile, but it occurred to Leontine in spite of herself, lately she had somewhere seen the engraving of a wild boar rushing furiously through a tangled wood. How was it that this very fashionably attired old gentleman reminded her of that ungainly animal? Yes, he was a gentleman, this elderly personage, in the conventional sense of the word. His studs and wrist buttons were great beautiful diamonds; his overcoat thrown a little open at the throat, was of the richest sealskin; his hair and long moustache were silky white; his complexion was a well preserved pink and white; his boots were exquisitely made, and of the finest leather; one hand was gloved in pale coloured kid, the other, white and shapely, displayed a heavy ring, in which gleamed a huge costly emerald. All these details Leontine felt herself compelled against her will to notice. The reason was that the old man watched her

so intently and with such a disagreeable smile on his rather coarse lips that the girl felt half afraid of him, and thus in timid annoyance she "took stock" of all these items he had enumerated. It seemed quite necessary to watch this person. At last he spoke, and the sound of his voice grated on the nerves of Leontine, and thrilled her as with an electric shock.

"You look well this afternoon; you look charming, but I suppose you always do look charming, do you not?"

Leontine vouchsafed no answer to this rude address. She chose to consider it rude, for, old as the man was, he did not address her as an old man should address a child. There was a leering impertinence in his manner which made her feel hot and angry.

"My dear," said the old gentleman, "you must not be offended with me; I am a most innocent and praiseworthy individual, I assure you. Where are you going to get out, my dear?"

Leontine did not reply. She would have left the train when it stopped at the next station but she knew how little time was allowed, so she looked on the ground absolutely resolved not to answer any of this strange old man's questions.

"You think me a very bad and disagreeable fellow passenger," cried the old gentleman. "You are longing for the time when the train will stop at your own station. There you will jump out and you will say to yourself, 'Thank Heaven I have got away from that old wretch,' and all this is only because I am old and withered. If I were a handsome young man, as I was forty years ago, I might have spoken more insolently to you and you would not have been offended. It is a sad thing to be old, young lady. Most people hate you for it, that's what I find, but if you have a little fortune you will be better liked for the sake of what you have to leave behind you. Now suppose that I said to you 'My dear pretty young lady, I have taken an inordinate fancy to you, and if you will be my friend I will leave you ten thousand pounds in my will.' If

I really said anything of that sort to you what would your answer be?"

"I don't wish to talk to you at all, sir," Leontine answered indignantly.

The old gentleman smiled a smile which Leontine thought odious.

"Perhaps," said he, "if you knew a little more about me you would not be so angry. I am a very old person and I am rich—oh! very rich, and I have some affectionate relatives who would be quite delighted if I were to be kind enough to die. When I do I mean to disappoint some of them. I have been long looking out for a faithful and true and youthful friend to whom I may leave some of my riches."

He watched the beautiful face of Leontine through his eye-glass, and a cynical smile curled his lip.

"Before you get out of the train, my dear," continued the old gentleman, "I shall hand you my card. I have no doubt that you think me an offensive old person, but when you have seen my card, and when I inform you that I shall be delighted to see you at the next soirée that I intend giving at my house in Park Lane, perhaps you will come?"

As he spoke he rose, leaning on his grotesque walking-stick, an odd thing of gold and ebony, made in the pattern of a twist. The head was of solid gold, and was an actual caricature of the strange old gentleman himself, with his hooked nose and curling lips, bushy eyebrows, and long hair and moustache—all exaggerated to an absurd degree, not that Leontine saw the stick; she was only dreadfully afraid when she saw the terrible old man hobbling towards her.

She felt inclined to shriek aloud, but he only put his card into her lap. Her eyes fell upon it. The old man was watching the sweet, pale, agitated face. He saw the rich colour mantle over it, and the eyes flash a look of intense surprise. He chuckled, and seemed most thoroughly to enjoy her unfeigned astonishment.

"Ha!—ha!" said the old man, "you did not

know who I was, did you, my dear? So now, will you be more civil to me?"

"No!" the girl said, excitedly. "You are a wicked, and false, and unjust, and cruel man. You would not speak to me if I told you—" and then she restrained herself, bit her lip, and flashed a look of angry scorn upon the old man.

He only smiled more diabolically than before. "People have been kind enough to say, my dear," he observed, "that I am not a human creature at all, but his sable majesty himself. I have a club foot. Did you know that? True, it was not always so, and it is but an affection of the gout that makes me so lame, and my boots are so well made that a casual observer would hardly notice that one foot was much larger than the other; but I assure you I enjoy the reputation of being able to confer inestimable benefits or the reverse on humanity. People call me old, rich; and I suppose you have heard some of the stories they are kind enough to relate about me? Is it so?"

"I know how wicked you are," Leontine answered; "I have heard it from those who have suffered—who suffer now from your injustice. I could believe that you were the Prince of Evil in disguise."

The girl spoke with a vehemence which astonished the old man with the eyeglasses. At that moment the train stopped at Baker Street Station. Leontine stood up, unfettered, the door, and sprang out lightly on the platform. She had no luggage to see about; her trunk had been sent on by parcels delivery, consequently she had nothing to do but to hurry along the platform at the top of her speed.

She was much astonished to find the old man hobbling after her, and notwithstanding his gout and his lameness, the speed with which he got along was astonishing. She went up the steps; she arrived in the street, but the strange old man was still at her heels. Her heart was beating wild, tumultuous beats.

No young lover who had laid his heart, his love, and his future at her feet in the most approved fashion of romance could have agitated her soul more than the sight of that old man's card had done. He came and walked by her side, and he said, with his strange and mocking smile:

"No rebuff of this kind, my dear, has much effect on me. I am not at all annoyed to find that you have heard such terrible stories about me. I suppose you have read them in the society papers, have you? And you believe them all? One of them said that a broth made of stewed babies was my favourite dainty, and that I employed wretches to go out at night prowling about on the look out for little deserted infants left on door-steps. And many good folks believe that story. You among the rest, I make no doubt?"

"I am not such an idiot as to believe those hobgoblin stories, Lord Hartbury, although I am young and simple in the ways of the world; but I know of your wickedness; I learnt to pronounce your name in accents of fear and distrust as soon as I could speak."

The earl looked in some perplexity on the beautiful face of his grandchild. Not an idea had he that she was his grandchild. The thought of his son William seldom crossed his mind now. He had never troubled himself to inquire who his son had married, nor how many children he had.

In his heart the earl supposed them all to be what he would have termed "a lot of riff-raff." His son might be dead, and all his children walking in rags, barefoot in the lowest alleys for anything that this old man knew or cared to the contrary. And thus while some strange and powerful interest attracted him towards Leontine, whose face haunted this callous, selfish old individual like a dream of his youth, he had not the remotest idea that she was his grandchild. Such a thought never entered his head.

"You are very hard upon me," said the Earl of Hartbury; "but nevertheless I like you for it. Almost any other girl who found that she had made an impression on a 'live' lord, how-

ever old and crooked, would have become civil and smiling, and would have wished to introduce me to her relations. I suppose you are aware, my dear, that I am a widower, and in the marriage market, although I am seventy years old?"

"I know that," Leontine answered. "But that knowledge scarcely interests me. May I wish you good morning, Lord Hartbury?"

"Yes; you may wish me good morning," said the earl. "But I am an eccentric old dog, and I mean to find out your name and where you live. I mean to see you again, in spite of your insolence, which is charming. I mean to make you like me very much before many months have gone over your head. Nay, my child, I mean you no wrong."

The old selfish worldling's voice took a softer tone as he looked on Leontine through his eyeglasses.

"I mean you no wrong. There is a frankness about you which I admire; there is breed in you, I am sure of it. How is it that one so young and so lovely and with good blood in her veins, as I am sure you have, is allowed to travel alone, subject to the insults of old idiots like myself, and other younger and more dangerous idiots? Tell me that."

"There is no need, my lord, for me to tell you anything. I will tell you nothing. Find out for yourself, if you choose, what there is to find out about me, and when you have found it out, Lord Hartbury, you will be as anxious to avoid me as you now are to pursue me."

"What in the name of mystery is the child driving at?" asked the old nobleman with a pained frown.

By this time Leontine had hailed a cab. She entered it and closed the door.

"To Cavendish Square. Sir Peter Lingham's, Lingham House," she said to the driver, and away she was driven, leaving the old earl standing in the street, a whole world of memories, conjectures, fancies, whirling through his mind.

"Lingham, Lingham," he kept repeating to himself. "Sir Peter is an old bachelor of my age, or has—perhaps he has—married yonder sweet-looking child within the last two months or so, and yet—no, I heard he was abroad. I must inquire into this."

Arrived at the stately house which Sir Peter Lingham has let to Sir Robert Rodney, Leontine crossed the grand hall and asked to be shown first to her own room, next to the back drawing-room, in which Lady Rodney had ordered tea to be prepared for herself and her daughter.

The splendour of this fine house made an impression on Leontine with her intense love of the beautiful, her artistic tastes. She had never in her life seen anything so grand and noble in a private dwelling. She walked through the luxurious, long, lofty drawing-room like some maiden in a fairy story who is suddenly introduced into an enchanted palace where all is gold and pomp and splendour. The lofty painted ceilings, the walls panelled in amber satin, framed in ivory and gold, the gorgeous yet most perfectly artistic furniture, the cabinets of inlaid ivory, loaded with priceless china, the pictures, the couches, the flowers in great costly vases.

Leontine, in her plain though well made black dress, with white lace at throat and sleeves, relieved with a single bow of pale blue ribbon, was after all the most beautiful and graceful thing in the lofty saloons, but she thought not of herself until she came suddenly in front of a gleaming mirror, which formed a panel in a recess, and then she started and flushed—a start and a flush of something like pleased surprise at the recognition of her own loveliness, and then followed the pang.

She thought of the hero who had made a few short weeks of her life so bright and happy for her, of his low spoken words and pleasant voice, and of how she had given him her foolish heart, a treasure which he did not value, and then she saw stealing behind her in the mirror

another figure, graceful as an antelope, proud as a queen, with swan-like throat, and golden, gleaming hair, in a long flowing robe of dark crimson velvet, and lace ruffle fastened with a blazing diamond, and as Leontine gazed a strange, new feeling, akin to something between fear, loathing and an awe-struck admiration (contrary elements these), took possession of her soul.

In a moment she had recognised her cousin, Clementine Melrose, her lovely rival, the girl who had won with a glance the love of Athelstane Rodney; the girl who was to be his wife. Leontine did not know whether the engagement of Athelstane to Miss Melrose was made public as yet or not, but when she saw her coming up the room behind her in the long mirror, she said to herself, "Yes, it must be known now."

She turned suddenly, as if by instinct, and faced the beauty of two London seasons; the belle whose photograph had been displayed in so many windows, the rage, the toast, who had refused two coronets, and she saw with a strange thrill of surprise that Clementine had turned deadly pale.

"Ah," said the aristocratic cousin to the poor one, "you are here! I remember you well on that night when poor—"

She stopped, did not finish the sentence, but continued to look sternly at Leontine.

"She remembers that I told her that my name was Melrose, spite like hers. She seemed displeased then, and even now she resents it," said Leontine to herself. "Ah, if she only knew that we have, as I believe, not only every right to the name, but that she was in truth no one, her anger would be greater."

"Still, I remember you," repeated Clementine. She spoke as a queen might have spoken in the old days of power, when a queen could order out an offending cousin to prison, or even death. Her exquisitely pencilled brows met in a frown.

"How she resents my name being Melrose," said Leontine to herself.

Clementine then said: "What brings you here?"

And the spirit of Leontine, usually so gentle, rose in defiance of and antagonism against this beautiful coquette whom Athelstane loved.

"I am here, Miss Melrose, because my business lies here. I am engaged as companion to Lady Rodney."

Clementine laughed a little mocking laugh.

"It is to be hoped your duties will be light. You have not the robust appearance that one appreciates in a useful companion."

"My duties will be light," said Leontine.

She spoke almost with the haughtiness of her aristocratic cousin. Clementine turned away without another word. She walked about the room inspecting the various cabinets and the old priceless china with which they were loaded, and Leontine watched her and wondered why she should show her such an antagonistic spirit. Then Leontine went and rang a bell which brought a servant, whom she directed to prepare tea for Lady and Miss Rodney in the manner it had been ordered.

Soon after this the front entrance bell rang, and then the ladies came upstairs—not only the ladies, there was somebody else with them. Leontine heard a step on the stairs, the sound of which made her heart bound.

Yes, Athelstane Rodney entered the room where the tea was so cozily laid out. He was followed by his aunt and cousin, and he came forward and extended his hand to Leontine without the slightest embarrassment. It was nothing to him, it was so much to her, this sudden unexpected meeting. Her heart bounded and her cheeks flushed. Athelstane was calm and smiling, frank and kind, manly and pleasant as he always was.

"Aunt, this is Miss Melrose whom my mother recommends so highly, because she knows her so well. Miss Melrose, this is my very dear aunt. She is an invalid, as you know, and our men have carried her upstairs, but she is the liveliest invalid in the world."

At once Clementine assisted Athelstane to place Lady Rodney on the sofa, and then Athel-



stane introduced her to Eva. All this while Miss Melrose was alone in the long drawing-room examining the china, and Leontine wondered first if the Rodneys knew that she was there, and next whether Miss Melrose knew that the Rodneys had arrived, and while she wondered the door opened and Clemence glided in smiling like an angel!

## CHAPTER XXV.

## EVA'S WARNING.

The whole is one dark history  
Of a long-forgotten crime—  
A tale of wrong and mystery  
Done in the olden time.

An exclamation of delight escaped Athelstane Rodney. Leontine said that in an instant he had forgotten her presence and had gone to meet his ladylove with outstretched hands.

"You did not expect to find me here, did you?" the beautiful young lady said softly, and she suffered him to take her hands while he looked into her eyes as a lover looks, seeking there for answers to all the questions with which his heart was burning.

"I did not," he answered. "This is a delight which I had not promised myself so soon."

"And we are forgetting the others," Clemence cried breaking away from Athelstane and rushing towards Lady Rodney, now seated on a couch by the side of Eva, while Leontine stood at the inlaid side table pouring out the tea and giving the cups and the hot cakes to the footman to carry to the ladies.

"You are very much surprised to see me, Lady Rodney, I know," said Clemence. "You think, perhaps, that I have taken a great liberty in coming here before you, but I was anxious that you should be quite, quite comfortable. Athelstane has let me know all about your movements, and that you had taken Sir Peter Lingham's house, and I knew what a great place it was, I have visited here so often, and I thought it might seem unhome-like without some friend to welcome you."

Lady Rodney was as pleasant and as affable as possible to Clemence. She thanked her for her kindness, and asked her if the family were staying at the mansion in Park Lane, and when Clemence said yes, Lady Rodney expressed a great wish to drive there one afternoon and see Lady Melrose, whom she declared was a "most charming creature."

"And still so lovely," said Athelstane's aunt; in short, the elder lady and the young beauty said all kinds of amiable things to one another; but Eva Rodney watched the coquette, the French doll, as she always called her in her heart, with flashing, angry eyes.

Eva was, as we know, a strong-minded and uncompromising young person. She still bowed to the rules of good society, it is true, and was so far polite to the uninvited guest, that she begged her to take tea and a seat on the couch, but all the while she was saying in her own heart, "Bold, ill-behaved creature, why does she come here after Athelstane? Are they engaged? I will ask her that question plainly before she goes."

As for Clemence, she soon began to chatter in her usual light and reckless fashion, and when tea was over, she went through the suite of drawing-rooms to the one at the further end, where there was a piano, and soon she electrified them all by her most marvellous and lovely voice.

She sang only a French chansonnette, full of brilliancy and dash and sparkle, but it was a truly wonderful song when she sang it. Eva, who had, as she herself averred, a voice as hoarse as a raven, listened with a bitter pang of jealousy contracting her heart.

Athelstane covered his eyes with his hands and seemed to give his whole soul up to the act of listening, but he was looking through his fingers all the while at Leontine, who was occupied in some dainty lace work which Lady Rodney had asked her to put right for her.

"How beautiful Leontine is," he said to himself. "She is like a poem; she is like a painter's

conception of a Saint Therese; more beautiful than the dawn, and dowered with all the gifts of holiness, purity, and divine charity. How is it that she never looked so lovely before? Does she need all the grand surroundings of velvet hangings and gilded walls and painted ceilings to make her beauty stand forth as a rich gem in a rich setting? And she is the first cousin of Clemence—my Clemence; but Clemence does not know that Leontine's father is, of course, an illegitimate son of the wicked old earl. It is awkward her having the same name. I hope Clemence will find out nothing at all about it. They are something alike, this beautiful Clemence and Leontine, but yet there is a vast difference."

And Athelstane sighed. He scarcely knew himself why he sighed at that especial moment, but if he had analysed his feelings or asked himself the question he would have found it necessary to give himself some answer of this kind:

"Leontine has what Clemence lacks—a gentle, womanly expression of kindness and love and divine patience always on her face. There are indeed times when Clemence Melrose, the beauty of the season, looks and is compassionate and kind and angelic, but oftener the regal brow is clouded and the red mouth is curved in a mocking smile. Clemence, my bride, my promised, affianced bride."

Athelstane was in truth thinking these thoughts. Clemence Melrose had ceased her French song and now was playing a weird German melody with fantastic, elfish variations. Suddenly he felt a soft hand on his head, and looking up perceived his cousin Eva looking at him with eyes full of a strange love and pity.

"Tell me, is it really settled that you are to marry the French doll?"

"Eva, the woman you call by that contemptuous name is to be my wife. I will not have her so named to me."

"But I could give her worse names. Oh! I could tell you such a story of your promised bride. She has a terrible story in her past!"

"So you have said before, but then you admitted that it was all the story of the servants—mere low gossip."

"You don't wish to hear it, Athelstane?"

"No," Athelstane answered. "My life is pledged to her. All my future is wrapped up in hers. We are pledged; we are to be man and wife within three months. Shall I be so base, so disloyal to my love, my promised wife as to turn aside to listen to the gossip of a servants' hall. I could almost cry shame upon you, Eva, were it not that I love you as my cousin, the dear, true friend of my childhood, my fond, faithful playmate. I know, my dear, that your motives are good, but then I know besides that you are prejudiced, and prejudice makes us all unjust!"

Eva had for some time suspected that the courtship "by letter" of her cousin and Miss Melrose was going on apace. The last few weeks had been occupied so much in attending to poor Horace that it had seemed almost as if nobody at Wolvermoor Hall had had time or thought to spare for anything else, and yet each day came a scented letter for Athelstane in a pale grey envelope, directed in an exquisite female hand, and with the London post mark in the corner; and Athelstane, who rarely left his brother's side night or day, was still often engaged in writing by the bedside, so that Eva quite suspected a strong flirtation, but yet the news of the actual engagement stung her like a venomous serpent to the core of her heart.

"Your wife—your wife, Athy," she said, and her voice was broken by something like a sob. "Your wife ought to be pure as an angel, true as the stars. Oh, Athy, I know that I am not of high standard enough to become your wife, but this woman with a grim and ghastly secret in her past—something to hide. Oh, Athy, Athy! do not marry Clemence Melrose!"

Miss Rodney was much agitated. Athelstane, who knew of her deep and unfortunate attachment for himself, pitied her from the bottom of his warm heart, but did not attach so much importance to her excited statements as they seemed to merit.

At the same time the shadow of a lurking suspicion of mystery and wrong in the past hung over his whole inner soul like the shadow of a cloud upon the deep, smooth waters of a lake; something there was connected with the past career of Clemence Melrose; something he felt convinced, but what? Nothing so very dreadful, as Eva seemed to insinuate. Still there was something.

"After we are married she will tell me," he said to himself. "I shall hear it from her own lips. I fancy it will revolve itself into some foolish, clandestine correspondence with some individual beneath her in rank, perhaps during her schooldays, and the lower order of gossips have taken it up and made much out of little." Then he turned to Eva. "My dear cousin, I distinctly refuse to hear one word against Clemence. Henceforth let the subject drop between us for ever!"

"So be it," Eva answered, with a gloomy look in her dark eyes—"so be it. Henceforth, my Athelstane, my lips are sealed on this sad subject to you and to the whole world. May you be happier than I dare to hope, for if you do marry Miss Melrose—"

At that moment the weird German air with its fantastic variations came to a sudden close, and so the words of Eva became audible to Leontine, who sat on a low stool still engaged in the fancy lace work.

Marry Miss Melrose! What a strange thrill shot through her. She knew that the Miss Melrose meant her beautiful haughty cousin—not herself—and yet how was it? The words had in them for her all the meaning of a prophecy which concerned herself, and her heart leaped when looking up she saw the eyes of Athelstane fixed upon her with a wistful and tender expression. The next moment Clemence came gaily smiling into the room.

"Well, my good friends, I must wish you all good evening," the young lady said, smiling sweetly. "We dine at seven, and I am going to the opera this evening with Lord and Lady Cravenshurst. I cannot ask Athelstane to leave his aunt and his cousin on the first night of their arrival in town. They must be tired and timid perhaps of being alone until Sir Robert arrives, and so I will say good-night. You did not know, dear Lady Rodney, did you, that Athelstane and I are engaged? That is," she added, laughing, if you will give your consent."

Lady Rodney was not much taken by surprise. Miss Melrose, with her birth and her beauty and her three thousand a year, was a match that any young man of family might be proud to make. Lady Rodney smiled and offered congratulations, and then Athelstane, who felt that he could not intrude on the Cravenshursts whom he did not know, put his bride elect into a cab, directing her driver to take her to the mansion in Park Lane, and soon afterwards he started himself on an expedition to Bayswater to pay his mother a visit in her lodgings at fifteen, St. Charles Street.

Mrs. Rodney had been so long separated from her son Horace that her affections, not naturally strong, had weakened towards the once brilliant, now ruined, young man. She really seemed to take the sad news of his shattered intellects, wrecked life, and probably speedy death, in the most matter-of-fact manner. The business side of the affair she saw at once.

It positively appeared as though she applied to the misfortune of her son the axiom, "The king is dead! Long live the king!" Athelstane had naturally been her favourite, for he had never left her for long together, and he had always been a dutiful, if not docile, son, and as affectionate as he dared be. Mrs. Rodney was a rather cold woman who detested all demonstrations of love.

Athelstane was a little shocked to find that his mother had scarcely a tear to bestow on the sad fate of Horace. She talked incessantly of Sir Robert and of the succession of Athelstane to the heirship, and of the pecuniary and other

advantages to be derived from his marriage with Miss Melrose.

"Now that you are the heir," she said, "and are to marry an heiress, your uncle ought to allow you at least fifteen hundred pounds a year, five of which you ought to settle on me, and I would then live in a good neighbourhood—in one of the quiet squares—where I could get a house for a hundred a year. I would lead then a civilised life, which I am sure we do not lead in this abominable place."

Athelstane listened to all this, and sighed wearily.

"It is a horrible thing that I should profit by the murder of Horace," he said, hoarsely. "Oh! if I only could find out who struck him down."

"Dear me, I thought there could be no question about it," said Mrs. Rodney. "I understood that that wretch of a girl Margaret Bainton and her lover, Richard Brown, had done it without any question, and that they would have penal servitude for life if Horace lives, and both of them be hanged if he died. They ought both be hanged in either case," continued Mrs. Rodney, who approved of strong measures; "and," she added, "the English law is so absurdly humane."

"If they have done it," said Athelstane, "although poor Horace had ruined the girl, and she was desperate—Oh! mother, it is a horrible case. I cannot bear to go into the business details."

"Because you are so absurdly romantic," said his mother.

Athelstane had a little supper with his mother; gave her seven pounds, and took his departure by the ten o'clock train. As he got out of the carriage at Baker Street he gave a great start of surprise. Was it? Yes. Clemence Melrose getting into the next carriage.

In an instant he had mounted the steps, and he sank into the soft cushions, leaned back, folded his arms, and looked at the closely-veiled woman who sat opposite to him. Was it Clemence? Impossible! Just now he had seen, or he had fancied that he had seen, the lovely face of his bride elect.

The veil had been put up over the close seal-skin hat, and eyes like hers had gleamed just for the moment in the lamplight. The lady wore a long rich seal jacket; she sat upright, and stared at him, he fancied, through her veil. Was it Clemence? As the carriage moved on he spoke:

"Shall I put up the window?" he said.

The veiled woman bowed her head, and Athelstane put the window up. It was the outline of the figure of Clemence, or very like it. He spoke again:

"This underground atmosphere is stifling."

No answer.

But still ladies travelling alone often refused to enter in conversation with strange gentlemen, he told himself.

What could he do? How was he to find out if this woman were Clemence or not?—only by following her; and that he resolved to do. Little did he know what the carrying out of that resolution was to cost him. The train went on. The woman in seal-skin, did not she sit rigid and upright before him? It was not by any means the pose of Clemence.

"No—no, it was not Clemence," he said to his raging, anxious heart.

But still there was something so odd about this woman, and if she were not Clemence she was so like her that Athelstane was determined not to leave the mystery unclear. No, he would follow that woman wherever she went. The train went on to Ludgate Hill. At that uninteresting place the lady sprang out, and Athelstane followed.

The lady went and spoke to a railway porter. Athelstane was quite close to her; but he could not hear what she said. Could it be that she was afraid he would recognise her voice? Then she went up some steps and showed a ticket. Athelstane was asked for his. He had only his return from Westbourne Park to Baker Street.

While he was paying the excess fare the

woman in seal-skin rushed on. He followed her, and found himself on a comparatively lonely platform, waiting for the Camberwell train. The ticket clerk had taken from the five-shilling-piece he tendered the first-class fare to that place.

Only he and the lady in seal pacing the platform and waiting for the train to Camberwell. They passed and repassed each other many times. At last up came the train. The lady waited for him to get in; but since he did not move, she entered a carriage, and he followed. Again alone together in silence, they travelled to Camberwell. There the lady got out, and again he followed.

It was raining when they emerged into the bleak road outside the station. The wind was blowing a hurricane; the young lady had no umbrella; Athelstane had one, which he offered her, but she tossed her head disdainfully and walked on, and thus he followed her into the main road, and then suddenly she turned up a narrow lane, where the mud came over the tops of Athelstane's boots as he walked. On he went however.

At last the woman stopped under the shadow of a tall moss-grown wall, which evidently enclosed the large garden of some old-fashioned house.

(To be Continued.)

## THE FORCED MARRIAGE; —OR— JEW AND GENTILE.

### CHAPTER VIII.

It would be futile to attempt to describe the feelings of Rachael Aveling as upon her bended knees she gave vent to her grief. Young and inexperienced, her life had been so strangely spent that at sixteen she was in many respects more childish, even infantile, than a person of half her years.

Without companionship of any kind save that of her uncle, she had had no standards of comparison, no incentive to emulation, no exemplars by which to gauge her own thoughts and feelings. Had her life been spent behind the bars of a prison instead of within the walls of a tenement house she could not have grown up more ignorant of the world and its ways.

Though there had never existed much sympathy or love between her uncle and herself, his cruel abandonment of her filled her with a grief which bordered upon despair. She could compare herself to nothing but a shuttlecock which once in other days she had seen some children tossing about from one to another, driving it in one direction with a sharp blow and meeting it at another with one equally hard and telling.

A pitiful feeling of envy filled the girl's mind that she were not the inanimate thing which received yet felt not those buffeting blows, and turning toward the only refuge she had ever known she sought to steel herself with that indifference which had become so natural to her.

With her face buried deep in the cushion of the chair before which she knelt, she was oblivious of everything around her—not even a glance had she cast about the place which henceforth was to be her home.

She was finally startled by the consciousness of another presence in the same room with herself. She felt a warm breath upon her cheek, and presently upon her hand there fell a cold, moist touch.

Startled and terrified, for the strain upon her nerves had been so great that she knew not what other alarm might next befall her, she suddenly raised her weeping eyes to encounter a face close to her own which made her fall back with a cry of terror. But the next instant she started forward and threw her arms passion-

ately about the shaggy neck to which the dark, sympathetic face belonged.

Let not those favoured mortals who have never experienced the bitterness of a lonely, unloved life smile that others less favoured than themselves sometimes find a keen pleasure, a compensation almost satisfying, in the mute sympathy of the lower orders of beings. By a subtle intelligence of a higher kind than instinct, animals, especially dogs, detect suffering in the human race, and often by mute, gentle means seek to assuage it.

Thus the wretched, suffering, discarded young wife, overborne by grief, when she lifted her eyes, looked into the serious, sable, sympathetic face of a huge Newfoundland dog which had stolen into the room from out of doors.

The creature's face, dumb animal as he was, wore a kindlier expression than she had ever seen on any human countenance; his distress at her grief was so evident, his desire to comfort her so apparent, that it seemed to the grief-stricken young girl that a friend had come to her in her time of need; so it was indeed with the ready impulsiveness of heart answering to heart that she threw her arms about the dog's shaggy neck and laid her tearful cheek against his.

The animal turned his head after a few moments and lapped the tears from her face, dropping his ears the while and assuming that pleased, benevolent look which dogs always wear when in the presence of those whom they love.

"Ah, my friend," cried Rachael, patting the animal's long silken ears and looking into his mild eyes with real confidence, "do you, too, know what sorrow is that you come to comfort me now?"

At the sound of her voice the dog wagged his tail and again essayed to wipe away the tears which rolled down her cheeks afresh. She took the animal's huge head in her arms and held it close to her bosom.

"You do indeed comfort me," she sobbed. "Never before has anyone come near me when I have been sad."

The dog stood up, and moving a few steps away looked back at her, wagging his tail with kind encouragement. Rachael almost instinctively accepted the invitation, and rising, also looked around her.

The animal gave a short bark of delight, and making a few gambols, at sight of which the girl could not forbear smiling, his movements were so elephantine, prepared to follow. Distracted for a moment from her own sad thoughts, she allowed herself to be led whither the animal seemed inclined to go.

So she followed him through the next room and one beyond, to an open window, through which he sedately stepped on to the ground below, when he turned gravely about, and looking up at her, with his eyes blinking in the outer sunshine, waited for her to follow.

"Oh, you wise comforter," the young girl cried, laughing, despite herself, at the dog's gravity and intelligence. "You think that sunlight and fresh air, bright flowers and singing birds will cheer me, do you, and you would like a turn about the grounds perhaps yourself. But, my friend, though you know a great deal, there are some things you do not understand. You are at liberty to go where you please about this place, but I am restricted, and not without permission can I stir from these rooms."

She seated herself beside the open window as she spoke, and looked out upon the bright prospect beyond. Ashurst was a fine estate of large extent and noble situation. The house, as before stated, was large, capacious, of irregular construction, and of remarkably pleasant arrangement, while the views from nearly every window were of the most agreeable description.

Those pertaining to the suite assigned to the young Jewess opened upon a sloping lawn, bounded at its farther limit by a thick hedge of considerable height, beyond which rose noble forest trees of lofty height and rich foliage. The lawn itself was enlivened by parterres of bright flowers, whose fragrance was wafted to



the spot where the young girl sat, by soft zephyrs, which exquisitely tempered the midday heat.

For a moment a sense of keen pleasure stole over the girl's senses. Every faculty, every emotion, seemed entranced, swallowed up in pure sensuous enjoyment. Never before had her eyes feasted upon so lovely a scene; never, indeed, had her imagination circumscribed by the dingy brick and mortar of the city, pictured anything half so beautiful as this velvet sward, that distant foliage, those bright beds of flowers with their exquisite perfume, and over all the brilliant sky, across the perfect blue of which there floated soft fleecy clouds like the snowy massed plumage of angels.

The dog who had enticed her to this matchless scene seemed satisfied with his achievement, and since he could not coax her to follow him farther, stretched himself upon the turf beside the window, basking in the sunlight with oriental content, his ebony coat reflecting the summer sheen like scales of silver.

Looking out upon the view before her there arose in the mind of the young girl an humble sense of her own ingratitude in having repined at her lot, when just at her hand there was such a reassuring picture of God's beneficence and grace. Naturally devout, a feeling of thankfulness swelled within her, that in the midst of sorrow and distress she should be permitted to look upon so glowing and so satisfying a picture of earthly peace.

Even the harsh words which her husband had spoken to her rankled in her memory with less bitterness as she thought that to him she owed this present moment of joy; yet, with the recollection of her husband, and of his words, there shot through her heart a pang which reminded her that there never was an Eden so fair but that a serpent had left therein its trail.

The girl leaned far out into the sunlight, for she coveted its warming rays, as those who have been chilled and shaken by deep grief always do.

As she did so her eye ran along the walls of the house where she was so unhappily installed. She observed that the wing where her rooms were situated were not very far distant from another and a smaller wing which joined it at right angles, and chancing to raise her eyes to the upper windows of this minor wing she beheld the face and figure of Mark Upton.

He seemed to be intent upon some letter or document which he held close to the window, as if scanning its contents. Rachael drew back, hoping, yet scarcely knowing why, that she had not been observed. The dog's attention was attracted by her quick movement, and looking over his shoulders he again dropped his ears and wagged his great, sweeping tail with bland reassurance.

It is strange, the girl thought, with how fast a hold a sympathetic tie can bind a human being to a brute. Already she had begun to place a strange reliance upon the dog at her feet, for in his mute but expressive way he seemed to have taken her under his protecting care.

"Pluto," she said, the dog's black coat suggesting the name, which, curiously enough, chanced to be the one owned by the animal.

The dog arose, and turning about, put his great head in at the window and laid it in her lap.

"Pluto," she said, still diverted and pleased by his intelligent bearing, "you and I must become fast friends, for if we do not I am sure I do not know what will become of me. Look in my face, Pluto, and tell me if ever before you saw a girl who never had a friend in all her life, who never saw the bright, fresh country before to-day, and who has wished a thousand times that she had never been born! What shall we do with ourselves when the sun stops shining, and when we cannot enjoy this soft, beautiful air? You look wise enough to tell me a great deal about life, and I wish from my heart you could speak and give me the counsel I need so much."

The dog stood looking into the girl's face so

trustingly, and wagged his tail so understandingly that she found it an easy matter to continue her monologue.

"Oh, Pluto!" she went on. "It is a terrible thing to be alone in the world without anyone to turn to for a friendly word, but it is a more terrible thing still to feel that you are hated and despised! It is by no fault of mine that I am here. I would gladly leave, but where should I go? My uncle threatened me with terrible consequences if I disobeyed him and went away; yet I feel that consequences still more dreadful will result if I remain. Oh, Pluto, when I think of the harsh and cruel words which the man whom they made my husband spoke to me, I feel like falling down and crying aloud; but when I think of that other one—that pale tall man who used to come to my uncle's so often, I shiver and tremble with a horror I cannot explain. We must beware of that man, Pluto! He would do us both a grievous injury if he were so minded."

The dog seemed to understand her words, for at that moment he gave a low growl like an assenting response. Rachael looked up in the direction of the dog's glance, for something had attracted without the window, and as she did so she saw that Mark Upton was leaning far out into the open air as if he also wished to bathe himself in the balmy sunshine.

As he looked about him he hummed a gay tune. The dog's upward glance and his low growl showed that between the girl and himself there was another bond of sympathy, for with that true instinct which with dogs is an unerring touchstone of character, Rachael knew that her dislike and dread of Mark Upton were shared by her dumb comrade.

"Come," she said, drawing back into the room, "it is not wise to brood over sorrows we cannot help. Let us amuse ourselves by examining our rooms, for, Pluto, if your master does not object, you shall have the privilege of coming and going here just as you please. So let us look round and see what we can find to drive sad thoughts away."

She arose and left the window. Glancing around she saw that the room where she stood was a parlour of small size, but pleasant proportions, with its two French windows commanding the lovely view already described. This apartment, like the bedroom and the little reception room, or rather lobby adjoining it, were fitted up in a style quite popular a score of years before, when they had been occupied by the elder Mr. Aveling as an occasional retreat when wishing to withdraw from the society which his wife during her lifetime was so fond of collecting about her in her beloved Ashurst.

Consequently the appointments of the rooms were of a substantial but plain description, with no attempt at tasteful arrangement or decoration, and as the deceased Mr. Aveling had abandoned their use many years previously they had remained undisturbed and unaltered until the unexpected arrival of the unwelcome young bride, when they were hastily thrown open for her reception.

"So this is my home—my prison," the girl thought, as she wandered from room to room and looked curiously around. "During my husband's presence in Ashurst I must confine myself to these apartments, lest I might cross his path; but when he is away I may enjoy a little wider range. Such, I think, were his instructions. Such is the price I must pay for obedience to the commands of those I dare not offend."

She looked more helplessly about her, for before her mental vision there arose a long, lonely vista, the end of which was shrouded in a misty uncertainty.

How were those solitary days, those weeks, months, years perhaps, to be spent? The dull monotony of a lonely existence now appalled her, accustomed as she had been to it from infancy. In the past she had hoped for better things as day by day dragged slowly by; but now, what was this sudden change but a firmer shackling of liberty, a closer guard set over her?

Her melancholy train of thought was interrupted by a tap at the door, and even before she had time to respond a servant entered bearing a well-filled tray, the contents of which he proceeded to arrange upon the centretable.

Rachael revolted at the sight of food, although faint from the lack of it. A great weight of grief still oppressed her, and until that should be removed she felt incapable of swallowing a morsel. The servant, in arranging the table, chanced to catch sight of the dog at Rachael's feet.

"Hi!" he said, impatiently. "Away with you, you dirty fellow! Get along. Go out, I say."

And starting towards the animal he made as if he would drive the unoffending creature from the room. The dog arose obediently, and, with drooping tail and ears, was hastily retreating through the window when Rachael put out her hand and beckoned him back.

"I called him in," she said to the servant. "I am fond of dogs, and prefer he should remain with me."

"Just as you please, ma'am," the man sullenly replied. "But Pluto has never been allowed in the house before."

"To whom does he belong?"

"To no one in particular, ma'am. He's a sort of tramp that came along one day last fall and wouldn't go away. Nobody wants him here, but we don't just know how to get rid of him, so we give him something to eat every day and a place to sleep, but if we should find him dead some morning no one would care."

Rachael flushed with a keen sense of the likeness between the dog's position in that house and her own. She also had "come along" and couldn't go away. She would be given something to eat every day, and a place to sleep, but if she were to die there would be none to care. Still another sympathetic tie was established between herself and her dumb companion, so once again she affectionately stroked his shaggy head and neck.

The man eyed the pair with sidelong glances of disapproval. Already the arrival of this strange woman had been announced and discussed in the servants' precincts; various were the conjectures formed as to her antecedents, and it is not unlikely that the scant courtesy which the young girl then received from the man would have been much more limited had it not been for the influence of Mark Upton, who, for some secret purpose of his own, chose to befriend his cousin's timid young wife.

The repast served, the man would have waited to attend upon the young lady's wants, but she dismissed him with a wave of the hand.

"Come, Pluto," she said. "This dinner shall not be served for nothing. You shall eat what I have no appetite to touch," and with her own hand she fed her sable friend with the best the board afforded.

The long summer's afternoon, the lonely twilight, and the solitary evening passed much as such time ever passes with prisoners immured behind bars and stone walls.

The bright sunshine faded, the sky became overcast, darkness shut the flowers from view, and the chill dews of night compelled the young wife to shut the windows and draw the curtains close.

In the dreariness, the loneliness of that evening she thought, even with regret, of those other evenings when she had sat through long hours in the money-lender's dingy apartments looking out into the murky or starlit night.

Those scenes were, at least, familiar to her. She felt a sense of neighbourliness when the hum of voices in the rooms below fell upon her ears, and the occasional sound of Levy's voice or footstep was a sort of companionship which she had never realised or valued until now.

But in this place the silence was unbroken by any sound whatever. Even the dog had left her when she closed the windows. A servant, indeed, had brought lights, but these she had extinguished, so loth was she to make her lone-

liness visible. At a late hour she made fast the doors of her rooms, and, with a weary heart, sought her bed.

### CHAPTER IX.

DAYS, weeks, months passed. More than a year had elapsed since the mourning bride arrived at her new home. The glorious summer gave way to sombre autumn, the later days of November were already giving cautionary signals of approaching winter, and still Rachael Aveling remained an inmate of Ashurst.

The experiences of the last year, few indeed in number as they were when counted upon the fingers of the hand, were fraught with the impress of a lifetime.

Though still extremely young, the neglected, shunned young bride had in feeling and in thought made rapid strides toward maturity; for during the long, weary hours of her virtual imprisonment she had deeply pondered the problem of life, she had studied well the various phases of her singular experience, and she resolved to await with fortitude whatever change Providence might have in store for her.

The wild longing to fly from the place which she first felt gave way after a time to a more quiet mood, and her native dignity asserting itself, she determined to support with calmness the trials of her position.

She was undeniably Edward Aveling's wife. He had selfishly made her such; she had protested against it; and now was she to fly from the place which was rightfully yet bitterly hers, and wreck her whole future by running into dangers which her inexperience could not fathom?

No! An unkind fate had led her to Ashurst, and there she felt compelled to remain, although day by day she ate the bitter bread of contumely and dependence.

She scrupulously obeyed her husband in everything he had commanded. She never crossed his path; her shadow never fell upon any threshold which his foot pressed. Early in the day, before the household was astir, and early in the evening, when no one was abroad, she walked, for an hour or two in the garden upon which her windows opened.

Pluto, her faithful friend, was her constant companion at these times, walking sedately by her side, turning back and forth as she turned, stopping when she stopped to gather flowers or to adjust a wandering vine, pleased when she rested her hand affectionately upon his head, and seeming to smile a return when she spoke to him.

Life in this quiet spot at last began to show some compensations, for gradually her love of nature awoke within her certain questionings which science alone could satisfy. Watching the daily development of the flowers about her, she grew fond of tending them, and finally, dispensing with the gardener's services, she watered them morning and evening, she put herself on rapport with their nature, she pruned their redundant tendencies, she encouraged their feeble efforts, she gathered their profuse blossoms, and thus secured a better harvest; and when their gay season of blooming was over, she gathered the tiny seeds or bulbs, she cleared the ground of useless leafage, and adjusted the plants for future usefulness.

These duties awoke in her a desire for more intimate acquaintance with her charges, and fortunately the well-filled cases in her little sitting-room afforded her the information she needed.

Botany, chemistry, philosophy, and many sciences more abstruse were represented upon those shelves, for the elder Mr. Aveling found ample time from his more engrossing mercantile pursuits to satisfy his intellectual cravings; and thus employed, the young girl found that her time passed much more pleasantly and profitably than she at first anticipated.

A few days after her arrival, too, a piano had been brought to her rooms, by means of which she had enlisted many a twilight hour, for, thanks to the money-lender, she was not alto-

gether destitute of musical knowledge, and aided by a deep love for the art, she was soon able to conquer many of the masterpieces of the old composers which fortunately accompanied the instrument.

Thus the hours of summer and of autumn passed with their ample occupations and diversions, yet with no hint of aught concerning outer life penetrating that quiet retreat.

No signs of her uncle's existence, or of his whereabouts, reached her. At first she longed for some message from him, but at last she gave up the futile hope and resigned herself to his utter abandonment.

Yet she would often sit and think of him and of her own future lot, as now, upon this cold, rainy November evening, with Pluto by her side, she sat in a low chair looking into the glimmering embers upon the hearth, trying to picture therein, as many another has done, what her future was to be.

Save for the flickering firelight the room was in darkness, for Rachael loved to sit thus thinking and pondering. During the day she denied herself many thoughtful moments; she felt that her mind was all the healthier if while day lasted she kept herself busy with her books, her music, and her flowers; but during the twilight, with Pluto lying at her feet, she indulged in many a long reverie which in a certain way she greatly enjoyed.

"Pluto," she said, leaning down and patting the dog's head, "you and I grow more friendly every day, do we not? We are a great comfort to each other, and to-night we ought both of us to be very thankful that we are so safely housed, for hark! how the rain dashes and beats against the windows."

The dog turned his head, and Rachael, expecting to see him drop his ears in that familiar complacent way so common to him, was surprised to hear him utter a low growl as he looked towards the windows of which he seemed to know she had been speaking.

Instinctively the girl turned her own head in the same direction, and peered out into the darkness beyond the casement before which the curtain had not yet been drawn.

The firelight, flickering up and down, cast weird and fanciful shadows about the room and against the window panes. So, though at first a little startled by the dog's unusual growl, she presently turned back to him, saying:

"Pluto, my friend, you are nervous to-night. Have you never before noticed what funny shadows an open fire throws around? You must be more of a philosopher and not give way to such fanciful notions."

But the dog, instead of obeying her as he usually did, rose upon his haunches and still kept his eyes fixed upon the window against which the rain was dashing in torrents.

Presently another growl, louder and more decided than the first, broke from the animal, and changing his position he wheeled about so as to face the same uncourteous casement.

"Nonsense—nonsense, Pluto!" said the girl, half laughing, for in her solitariness she had fallen into the habit of speaking to the dog as if he were a human being, the sound of her own voice even being a comfort to her. "I really believe you are getting old and notional, and fancy you see visions where none exist. Shall I draw the curtain so you can go on with your nap more comfortably?"

The young girl arose and went towards the window to do as she said, but as she reached out her hand to draw the drapery, a human face suddenly, and to her infinite horror, looked in at her through the dripping panes.

With a cry of alarm she fell back, and the dog, starting forward in angry excitement, made as if he would plunge through the glass and spring upon the intruder. But Rachael, although she had herself retreated in terror, laid her hand upon the dog and forcibly held him back, while her affrighted gaze was fixed upon that strange apparition outside in the darkness, wet and cold.

It was the face of a woman upon which she looked, old, haggard, wrinkled and grey, with streaming hair hanging wet and dragged down on either side of her face, and with toothless

gums, as the startled young girl could plainly see as the creature stood gesticulating and evidently speaking, though not a word she uttered reached the interior of the apartment.

Chilled with horror at this sudden and most terrible appearance, Rachael stared at awhile like one transfixed. She had deemed herself so securely placed; she thought the little garden upon which her window looked so hedged in, that no thought of a stranger's intrusion ever came into mind; so now she stood wondering and frightened, uncertain whether to ring for a servant, to drive the creature away, or to open the window and admit her to the warmth and comfort of which she evidently stood so much in need.

The dog had been quieted by his mistress's commands, but still he stood alert and watchful, his eye fixed intently upon the window, and uttering an occasional growl of displeasure.

The being without, tall, gaunt and forbidding, made a sign to the young girl to open the window, pointing to the fire as if in token of suffering. With reluctant steps, obeying the promptings of a kind heart, rather than the strange woman's mandate, Rachael went to the window, unlocked, and opened it.

The intruder, with little effort, placed her hand upon the sill and in a moment was within the room. She walked to the hearth, dragging her long, dripping garments after her, sunk upon her knees before the fire, and after wringing the water out of her long, grey hair, held her bony hands out towards the blaze to catch a little of the warmth.

Rachael, half stupefied with alarm, and wholly perplexed, nevertheless urged the fire into a ruddier glow, and drew forward a chair; which she motioned the woman to occupy; an invitation which the latter entirely disregarded, as she remained upon the rug rubbing her hands, and staring with a fixed, stony gaze into the fire.

Presently, when the heat seemed to have quickened her faculties, and somewhat thawed her benumbed members, she started, and turning her head quickly, looked up at Rachael, who stood timidly near, gazing at her with wonder and a certain superstitious kind of awe.

To the solitary girl it seemed as if this creature had suddenly started up from the ground, like an unearthly miasma, which now in bodily form entered her room, crouched upon her hearth, and sought to warm its death-chilled hands at her fire.

She would have spoken to the creature, but she could not break the spell which bound her; when she essayed to move her limbs refused to obey her bidding, and when she tried to speak her rigid lips and tongue failed to articulate the words she would utter. But the woman, looking up, herself broke the silence.

"The night is cold, and dark, and dreary," she said, with a shiver, unconsciously to herself, quoting a well-known line of poetry.

She drew her torn shawl closer about her shoulders and repeated:

"It is cold, and dark, and dreary."  
"Will you not take this comfortable chair?" asked Rachael, the sound of a human voice breaking in upon her fears and partially dispelling her terror.

The woman shook her head, while with one hand she pushed the chair away from her.

"No," she said. "It is enough that I warm myself by this fire, that this roof for a moment shelters me from the cold wind and rain outside. It is enough that I rest my weary limbs for a few seconds on this hearth. More than I need I will not accept."

"But you are chilled, you are faint, and this comfortable chair is quite at your service," returned Rachael, a sudden pity-taking the place of her former terror and repugnance. "There is no harm in your sitting here awhile to dry your garments and recover yourself a little."

But the woman waved an angry refusal.

"Do not offer me anything," she said, hoarsely. "I did not come here to beg for your sympathy, or for your charity. I have another errand."

She arose from her knees and stood before



the young girl, towering above her, tall, angular, and to Rachael's eyes, most terrible of aspect. She took from her bosom a paper, and unfolding it, held it out toward the girl, pointing at a certain paragraph for her to note.

Rachael glanced at it—read it from beginning to end. It was an announcement of her own marriage—the same which months before had so startled Mark Upton and even the bridegroom himself. The young girl, having read it, looked up into the haggard, weird face before her. The eyes bent down upon her were fiercely noting her changing countenance.

"Who is Rachael Levy?" the woman asked, in a hollow tone.

"I am—or was—Rachael Levy," the other replied, trembling as with an ague, she scarcely knew why.

"And who is Edward Aveling?" the woman again demanded.

"He is my husband," Rachael reluctantly replied.

"When were you married?"

The girl pointed to the paragraph.

"That will tell you," she replied.

"Answer my question!" the stranger commanded. "You need not evade it. When were you married?"

"The twenty-ninth of June—eighteen months ago."

"Where is your husband?"

"Indeed I cannot tell you."

The woman seized the girl by the arm, while she, hurt and terrified, would have screamed aloud if again her voice had not failed her. The dog, a watchful observer of everything passing, with a sharp bark raised himself to spring upon the intruder, but she, slightly turning her head, said:

"Down, you brute! Silence!"

The animal obeyed, but still, undaunted and uncowed, kept near his young mistress, eyeing her companion, and ever and anon lifting his upper lip in a manner which portended a dangerous intent.

"Where is your husband?" the woman once more demanded, looking fiercely into Rachael's face, which she had drawn close to her own.

"Indeed, I cannot tell you—I cannot, truly."

The woman smiled incredulously, and throwing off the arm she had grasped, said:

"So lately a bride and already she does not know where her husband may be?"

Rachael made no reply, for there had come into her mind doubts of the woman's sanity. She deemed her a poor, wandering creature, escaped, perhaps, from some neighbouring asylum, who, attracted by the firelight in her room, had sought and obtained admittance.

This conjecture calmed instead of increased the young girl's alarm, for she had no fear of those unfortunates so cruelly bereft of life's greatest boon.

"Pray be seated, will you not?" she again asked. "My husband is possibly at home, and if you wish to see him, I will ring for a servant to conduct you to him."

"Do it at your peril," the woman cried, as Rachael raised her hand towards the bell. "If Edward Aveling is within this house I am able to find him without a servant's assistance."

She stopped a moment, with her eyes fixed upon the floor. Then suddenly raising them again to the girl's face, said:

"And so you are his wife, you say?"

"I am," Rachael steadily replied, restraining the impulse she felt to add her own regret of the fact.

"His wife?" the woman repeated to herself in a half audible tone. "His wife! His wife!"

The words seemed to possess a strange fascination, for she repeated them more than twice or thrice, alternately looking upon the girl and upon the floor.

"He is not abroad," she went on, as if communing with herself. "He is not abroad. He is here, for hither I tracked him from the city so far away. His carriage wheels dashed mud upon me as it passed, and his coachman snapped his long whip at me when I begged a seat be-

side him on the box; it was so cold, so dark and rainy."

Again the woman shivered and bent nearer the fire.

His master brought his face close to the carriage window to see what caused the short delay. I saw him, and he saw me, for he drew suddenly back and called to the coachman to go on: and I laughed—I could not help it—as I stood there in the wet and cold, and he so warm and comfortable in his crimson-lined carriage. Yes, I laughed! He saw me laugh, and his face grew paler and paler, while mine glowed with a sudden, pleasant warmth. Did you tell me where your husband was?" she suddenly asked, raising her voice and turning to Rachael, who, even in her terror and perplexity, noted the emphasis laid upon the word "husband."

"I told you I did not know; I would gladly tell you if I were able."

"And only a few months married!" the woman again repeated to herself.

She turned away from the fireside and moved toward the door leading into the corridor. Rachael, distrusting her purpose, again raised her hand to the bell-ropes; but ere she touched it the woman also again sprang to her side, gesticulating, and muttering fiercely:

"Ring at your peril! I tell you I can find my way about this house, and have no need of servants to lead me whither I wish to go! Ring the bell if you dare! Touch it even, and despite the presence of your huge dog I will lay you dead at my feet!"

The words, uttered with the fierce determination of a maniac, had the desired effect. Rachael sank helpless into the chair which she had twice offered her strange visitor, while the latter still stood threateningly over her.

"You shall neither ring nor speak of my having been here!" she said. "If you utter a syllable of what has happened here to-night I shall find some means of punishing you. Heed what I say if you would save yourself needless trouble and sorrow."

She again turned and strode toward the door, opened it, passed through, and closed it behind her. Rachael sprang forward and eagerly fastened it after her strange visitor. Trembling with excitement, so eager was she to prevent the return of her unwelcome guest, she took no pains to conceal her movements, but with nervous haste shot lock and bolt into their places, thereby startling the very echoes in the silent corridor without.

She listened at the door until she heard the woman's footsteps die away along the passage; yet even as she thus listened it struck her that those footsteps were destined to echo with louder and yet louder reverberations throughout her father's years. Still they went steadily and with assurance, and as nearly as Rachael could conjecture from her own imperfect acquaintance with the mansion, they went toward that part of the building occupied by her husband.

Thinking it quite probable that the maniac—for such she could not but regard her strange visitor—would return to the room by which she had gained admittance, Rachael threw fresh fuel upon the fire, and her courage reviving now that she had opportunity for calm reflection, she resolved that should the creature return and demand admission, she would ring the bell with all her strength, rouse the servants, and commit the wanderer to proper restraint.

But though she waited hour after hour, her tormentor of the early evening did not reappear. Even the dog, who seemed to comprehend and share his mistress's determination, and who sat with cocked ears and steady glance fixed upon the door, seemed at last to give up all expectation of further disturbance, and stretching himself out on the rug, which was now his nightly resting place, he settled himself for a long sleep.

Rachael was too excited to follow the example of her dumb companion. Though her eyelids occasionally dropped, and though her head also fell forward upon her breast once or twice, she would not quit her place before the fire, but sat at her post until daylight stole in at the windows.

Then with the reassuring light of another dawn, she half fancied that the strange experience of the night had been a fevered vision born of lonely days and reverie haunted nights; but when she drew aside her curtains and looked upon the storm-washed earth she saw beneath her windows the traces of human feet upon the soaked ground, and upon her carpet there was the muddy trail of the woman's dripping garments. An hour later, too, when the servant came to mend her fire and bring in her breakfast, he nervously asked:

"Did you hear any noises about the house last night, ma'am?"

"Noises?" repeated Rachael, evasively. "What noises?"

"Oh, like somebody walking, talking, and laughing. Nicholls declares it was nothing but the storm or the rats, but there are others in the house whose ears are as sharp as Nicholls', and they say it wasn't the storm and it wasn't rats, and Mr. Upton wears a sober face to-day; so something must be the matter."

"I suppose you know, ma'am," the man added, after a few moments' intermission, during which he had been busy laying the cloth for breakfast—"I suppose you know that master has gone away again?"

"Indeed I replied the young wife, with such an appearance of interest as she considered necessary to assume before the servants when her husband's name was mentioned. He is fond of travelling, doubtless."

"But he's off this time before many of us knew he had come back. He only got in last night, and early this morning he went away again post-haste. Nicholls is in high dudgeon that he didn't tell just where he was going, but, then, that Nicholls always was a prying, jealous scamp!"

And so the man rambled on as he attended to his duties about the room, but long before he ceased speaking Rachael had ceased heeding him, being deeply engaged with a book, which, according to her wont, she consulted as she sipped her coffee.

(To be Continued.)

## MUSIC AT THE EAST END.

To hear good music a journey west is generally considered necessary, but that this is a fallacy is well known to those of our readers living at the East End. Excellent concerts are occasionally given at the Bow and Bromley Institute, and every Saturday recitals on one of the finest organs in London to good and appreciative audiences. The East and West India Dock Company also present programmes at their institute above mediocrity. The concert by the English Glee Union which we recently attended was thoroughly enjoyable, a critical audience testifying its appreciation of the ballads, glees, and madrigals performed. It is a promising sign for musical art when such institutions, ignoring clap-trap, are so liberally patronised.

There will shortly be placed in the Victoria Park, Portsmouth, an obelisk in memory of those men belonging to Her Majesty's ship "Active," who died while on shore during the last Kaffir war and the Zulu campaign.

Waists trimmed with fur will be fashionable this winter, it is said. The style originated on the French stage.

We are repeatedly asking the telegraph people to point their sentences and capital their words. Neglecting (as they always do) to take this trouble, they told the London papers that Lord Carnarvon at Winchester said, "The worst-paid country curate is expected to preach twice on Sunday with the persuasiveness of a journeyman-taylor, and the eloquence of a barrow." For "journeyman-taylor" read "Jeremy Taylor," and initial "Barrow" with a capital letter, and all is right.



[SCHOOL FRIENDS.]

## THE DRAMA OF ONE WOMAN'S LIFE.

"ALICE, ALICE EVANS, here's a letter for you!" And Alice, from her seat on a grassy knoll beneath the wide spreading branches of an elm in the pleasant grounds of C— seminary, eagerly extended her hand to take the precious letter she had been expecting, and which was now held suspended above her head by her teasing room-mate, Cora Thorp.

Ere the taper fingers touched the dainty envelope, it was hastily withdrawn and deftly deposited in Cora's pocket, and Cora herself plumped down on the grass by the side of Alice, who, with a slight tinge of haughtiness, silently bent her eyes on the book she had been reading prior to this interruption.

Cora with perfect nonchalance, began fanning herself with her sun-hat; passing comments, meanwhile, on the appearance and attainments of the various groups of classmates, scattered within the radius of her vision, and watching Alice furtively all the time. Finding that young lady able to preserve her dignity and temper under the trying circumstances, Cora ventured to presume a little farther, and drawing the letter from her pocket began a sort of running commentary upon the same.

"Ahem! writes a stylish hand, doesn't he? 'Miss Allie Evans.' Thought Lady Alice never

allowed anyone to call her by that pet name but pa and ma Evans? Perhaps this is a nearer and a dearer—"

"You impudent girl! How dare you, Cora Thorp! Give me my letter this minute," and with the signal lights of anger burning hotly in each cheek, Alice Evans bounced upon her feet, and made a grasp for her tormentor, who, with a merry burst of laughter, quickly threw the letter from her hand across a tiny flower pot, where it finally alighted in the lap of a demure little quakeress, Sara Hillis.

Of course, this dainty missive from the world was pollution to our little quakeress, who regarded the bold, dashing chirography as it showed up so conspicuously on the immaculate whiteness of the envelope, with dismay. In a moment, Alice bent before her, and with a graceful nod of her queenly head, transferred the letter to a book in her hand, and quickly walked in the direction of the deserted school-room.

Cora from her seat beneath the tree watched Alice's retreating form until the door closed between them. Then all the gaiety faded from her countenance, and, as if to shut out all the brightness around, she buried her face in her hands and—actually sobbed like an infant. Gentle Sara Hillis timidly crept from her flowery nook, and with faltering accents ventured to intrude upon her weeping wayward classmate; and her voice quivered with the sympathy she so longed to express—be the trouble ever so trifling.

"Miss Thorp—Cora—don't! I know Alice

did not intend to hurt your feelings. She—" "Who said she did? savagely interrupted Cora, now erect and mortified at her own weakness. "Who cares for Alice Evans? I wasn't thinking of her, I'm sure, and I'd thank you to let me alone!"

Thus repulsed, Sara returned to her sweet-scented bower, and Cora, taking a second letter from her pocket, eagerly glanced down its pages, until she found the sentence she seemed in quest of. This she read over and over again.

"Will be down by the seven p.m. train—Charlie, too, if Alice bids." I never saw anyone so infatuated as he is. I believe he would lose his place sooner than disappoint her most trivial wish; and she idolises him. I believe she would sit up all night and write to him, when her lessons are difficult, rather than disappoint his expectation. She has not been able to write many letters lately, though, since Madame concluded to hurry her through another French author."

Taking a pencil from her pocket, she drew a heavy line around the extract which had so much interested her, and then, returning letter and pencil to their former receptacle, she arose, and walking over to Sara Hillis, threw her arm about the retiring girl's waste, and, in a repentant mood, drew her across the shady lawn to a distant arbour, where all the students appeared to be directing hasty footsteps. One by one they had gathered together until all were there except Alice Evans, for whom there were many calls.

But Alice, in the quiet assembly-room, heard not, would have cared not, for their clamour. All her thoughts were concentrated on a sheet of written paper, smoothed out on the desk before her; while her eyes sparkled as they wandered back and forth over the well-written lines. And what she read called up a rosy flush on those cheeks usually so creamy white.

"Dear Charlie!" murmured Alice. "I shall see him two weeks from to-day, and he wishes to see me about something very important, he says. He thinks he has waited with a great deal of patience for me to finish my education, and now he must know how soon—" and now another rosy blush dyed the pale face, and ere it faded away the door of the school-room was violently thrown open and a bevy of noisy girls burst in, exclaiming:

"Oh, Alice, here you are, mewed up in the schoolroom, and we've looked everywhere for you. Come out to the arbour," and the merry girls scampered out of sight directly, while Alice, thus rudely interrupted in her reverie, slipped her letter into her desk, and more quietly followed their footsteps.

Sooner or later comes everyone's turn for fairy land. Once in almost everyone's life shines out the golden radiance through the wondrous gates, transfiguring all on whom it may shine, and, this being a part of the human inheritance, it would seem a need even for such quiet natures as Alice Evans.

I use the word quiet, because it appears the correct term for such characters as hers, about which there is a certain restful calm. She was seventeen, with a fresh, round face, made pale by hard study, liquid blue eyes, and long eyelashes, pearly teeth and a wealth of golden hair that fell in wavy masses below her waist. She was reserved in speech, dignified in manner, and a great student. Always a deep thinker, she readily became a quick and apt scholar—the pride of the school.

Cora Thorp was called handsome, with her brown eyes—eyes dazzling with a strange, dark beauty, like the beauty of the night—hair that danced about her restless head in flowing ringlets, and clustered round her white forehead in tiny rings; a mouth from which the low laugh rippled as musically as water from a fountain.

Both girls were rather tall, and slightly formed, and both were passionately fond of music and dancing, but Cora was fonder still of coquetry, and never allowed any scruples to prevent her indulging. As room-mates they enjoyed each other's society in a fashion.



Charlie Holbrook was the son of a wealthy merchant in H—. Manly, honourable, handsome, he was suited to make such a person as Alice happy.

Long they had loved, passionately, intensely, devotedly, and now nothing prevented the fulfilment of their happiness, but the short space of time that must elapse before Alice's graduation. Mr. Evans had forbidden all mention of the subject till then.

For the nonce, Charlie was a clerk in his father's warehouse, and among the other clerks was a Barry Walters, who had been sent at one time on a commission to Alice at C—, and thus become acquainted with Cora Thorp. He and Cora had danced together, skated together, flirted together, but as far as Cora was concerned the matter ended there, for Cora could not afford to marry a poor man.

She corresponded with him because his company was always agreeable and available, his appearance fine, and he danced and skated well, and through him she could send saucy little messages to Charlie Holbrook, who was quite unapproachable through any other channel.

These messages were simply annoying to Charlie, and always failed of their intended purpose, viz., an answer. Charlie, like Alice, never flirted, and could not understand that Cora (to use her own expression) might be "setting her cap" for him.

The subject under discussion in the arbour where we left Cora and Alice, was the annual ball given at the seminary in honour of the graduating class. In this, of course, both girls were interested. Alice particularly, for did not Charlie speak of it as the last ball of her girlhood, and would not he be there?

With so many all talking at once, the merry laugh and jest rang frequently, till the bell summoned all in to renewed study. But the ball furnished the engrossing topic of conversation for every spare moment the following two weeks, and each pupil took that degree of interest in the matter as she expected to take a greater or less place in the pleasure of the same.

Cora was all animation, flying hither and thither, arranging and re-arranging, advising, arguing, scolding by turns—a very master of the situation, if not of ceremonies. And Alice—what of her?

Alas, Alice grew quieter, and studied harder and later daily, and her eyes were frequently red and swollen in the morning, while dark circles settled beneath them, and her poor little hands trembled so that Madame R— ordered her to discontinue practicing for a while; and advised more exercise and less study.

But her trouble was beyond Madame R—'s ken—one of the mind—Charlie. She had received no letter from him since the one Cora had brought her, and she had written again and again fearing him ill. She had also written to Barry Walters concerning him, receiving the answer that Charley had suddenly left home for some medical college.

Left home now—now! Alice could hardly believe her senses. Charlie gone, and without one word to her. How she studied, how she thought, how she even slept, was a mystery. Everything seemed to have died about her, and only she left to mourn the vast solitude. Slowly the days dragged their weary length away, and finally the last day arrived—the day of the ball.

Alice would not stay to the ball. Indeed, she could not bear the word, but like one in a dream she started for home—quiet, peaceful home, where she might tell her grief to that loving mother, and wrestle in solitude with the weight that was crushing her.

After passing between hills, dusky with their covering of wood and underbrush, and through a pheasant-haunted wood we find ourselves stopping before the gates of a very tasteful, elegant house, almost hidden from view among its wealth of shrubbery. Everything about this place is enticing, and as one wanders up the

drive between a double row of evergreens and mountain ash, scenting the forest-laden air, one is not surprised at the dainty elegance of the interior.

In the sitting-room we note the warm, rich colours of the crimson curtain hangings, and Persian carpet, over which the cheerful fire-light flickers in fantastic shapes; the odd and pretty furniture, the delicate statuettes and the open piano. In the centre of the room stands a lunch-table, daintily set with old silver and choice china, waiting evidently for the owner of all this elegance—Doctor Searle Du Rie.

At one side of the room we espy a cradle, containing among its fluffy pillows and embroidery an infant's form, as perfect as a marble statue, and as pure and fair as an angel's dream. Beside the cradle sits the proud mother, Doctor Du Rie's wife.

She wears his favourite dress, a soft white cashmere, with no ornament but a brooch of onyx and gold, and her hair falls in masses of burnished gold to her waist. Truly an exquisitely beautiful woman, and an exquisitely beautiful room. Ever and anon the lady's eyes were raised towards the clock as though able to pierce the darkness, and now and then her head was bent forward in a listening attitude.

Soon her patient watching was rewarded by a hasty step on the gravel walk, and she jumped up to light the lamp, the first ray of which fell upon the form of a tall, broad-shouldered man of about thirty-two, whose brown beard, brown hair and genial smile were well known in this village of M—.

Dr. Du Rie closed the door, and, walking up to the fire, spread out his hands to the genial heat, and presently remarked, as he glanced at the clock and then back at the face of his wife:

"I'm a little late to-night. I hope I didn't keep you waiting, Alice. I had to go out to Raymond's, and that took me an hour longer than I had calculated when starting. I've got a letter for you, but I think I must have left it in my overcoat pocket, in the hall."

Quickly Alice sprang out of the room, expecting a letter from her father, and a letter from home was like sunshine to this poor transplanted flower. Trembling with haste she drew it from its hiding-place, and standing in the light beneath the hall lamp, eagerly tore open the envelope; as she did so, another smaller missive dropped from its folds and fluttered to her feet.

Stooping to raise it, the address, as she curiously scanned it, sent a thrill through her frame. A faintness overcame her, and her breathing became thick and laboured, as she sank upon the stairs before she ventured to open it.

It bore the address of "Miss Alice Evans," and was sent in the care of Mr. Charles Evans. We will read it:

"DARLING,—

"Do you care to hear from me again? May I write? I know it all now, and although we may have been fearfully wronged I dare not venture to intrude even an explanation until you grant me permission. Tell me I may write. Will you not send one word to your suffering, deceived

CHARLIE?"

With swimming eyes poor Alice read those lines that she had looked for so long ago, but now received too late, and then, as a flower struck with an early frost, her head sank down until it rested upon the open letter in her lap, and all was still as the grave.

Was she dead—had she fainted? Would nothing arouse her before her husband, kind and good always, should come out to look for her, and discover this tell-tale letter in her lap, and have his heart's happiness for ever wrecked?

Hark! A baby's wail, that sound that can most certainly reach a mother's ear. Yes, slowly Alice raises her pale face from her lap with a sigh that is almost a sob, and finally ends in a burst of tears that shakes her slight form as a reed is shaken by a storm.

For a moment she gives way to that grief whose shadow has dwelt in her heart for five years. As baby's cries become louder and more imperative, she struggles to throw off her violent emotion, and hastily wiping away the falling tears, she places her precious letter in her bosom and returns to the sitting-room with her dear father's letter open in her hands.

Doctor Du Rie, from his post by the cradle, glances up at her with a look of relief as she appears in the doorway, which look is instantly changed to a graver one as he quietly remarks:

"A letter from your father, I see; I'll have to charge him not to administer his remedies in quite such powerful doses, as they don't agree with his patient, and I don't like my wife to have the blues."

Alice called up a feeble apology of a smile, and requested her husband to read it aloud while she soothed baby. She placed the letter in her husband's hand, and clasping her babe to her aching breast, began rocking back and forth, while the doctor's low, pleasantly modulated voice filled the room.

Charlie, the only one she ever loved, was farther from her now than ever—and by her own act. Her husband's disposition was the very opposite of her own.

Entirely devoted to his profession, he could not understand what Alice could so much admire in a handful of strange grasses, or weeds, when he could see no beauty in them but their medicinal qualities, and a gorgeous sunset was a gorgeous sunset, and nothing more.

Essentially practical in all his views, he spent no time in day dreaming, and his journeys to and fro among those beauty crowned hills elicited no comment, stirred no emotion. Yet Doctor Du Rie was a person of many sterling heart qualities, and if Alice did not love him she certainly respected him, and no knowledge of Charlie should ever darken his peace or trouble his thoughts.

He knew when he proposed for her hand that she had had some sudden disappointment, for his was the skill that brought her safely through a dangerous fever succeeding her return from C—. And it was then he resolved to win his lovely patient if her life was spared.

Three years she waited and longed for Charlie, and then, in gratitude to Doctor Du Rie for his many kind attentions, she bestowed her hand where her heart was wanting.

The minutes ticked by all unheeded from a tiny clock on the mantel. It was so still you could hear the low, regular breathing of baby and his mother, as with her arms thrown upon the table and her aching head laid upon them, and her golden hair floating like a veil about her, she still called up the troubled panorama of her life.

She had promised to do her duty by Doctor Du Rie, and faithfully she had done it. Not of a very demonstrative disposition he did not expect his wife to be other than she was—quiet, sometimes sad, but always pleasant. After their marriage they settled in Doctor Du Rie's native place.

Mr. Evans had purchased and furnished the pretty house they lived in. Here they had passed the two years of their married life, here baby was born, and here Charlie's letter had found Alice at last—his Alice, and yet not his. Silently, solemnly Alice reviewed all this, and silently, resolutely she buried her own true love down deep in her heart—that lacerated, bleeding, troubled heart.

All during the silent night she knelt there, while the struggle went on, praying for strength to do her duty, until the soft, liquid stare of morning, gleaming through the murky, sombre mass of clouds fell upon her silent figure and appeared an angel's answer—peace.

The little time-piece on the mantel chimed five. The day was dawning, and Alice arose and calmly unlocked a tiny box in her escritoire, and taking Charlie's letter from her bosom wrote "not to be answered" across one end of the envelope, and then placed it beside another already there in the same handwriting, and addressed "Miss Allie Evans, C—."

Slowly she re-locked the box, as one would

place the lid of a coffin, and returned it to its place, and going to the window threw wide the blind to be greeted by the grey tinge of the dawning day.

All night the battle had lasted, but the victory was won and her heart was lighter than ever since her marriage, for did not Charlie know now that she was true, and his note spoke the love she had craved all these years.

Passing to her baby's crib she stood gazing at the lovely features and listening to the soft breathing, till she heard her husband's footsteps in the hall. Opening the door to admit him both bent over that crib with its precious contents, and neither spoke a word until Alice softly whispered, as she placed her finger on baby's forehead:

"I have named him."

The doctor, startled at his wife's manner, glanced up anxiously, but seeing no cause for alarm, answered with considerable curiosity:

"You have! Really I should like to know what name you consider good enough for our boy."

Quietly, slowly, but with emphasis, Alice pronounced, "Searle."

Thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven, tolled the distant bell, and as the last vibration died away among the verdure-crowned hills, Alice Du Rie arose from the ottoman upon which she had been sitting before the open window.

For many minutes she had been sitting there, with her head upon the window seat counting the strokes of the bell that slowly tolled off—her husband's age. Slowly, sorrowfully, she walked to the mantel and stood gazing at the picture of the man with whom she had never had the least cause for anger, and who in dying had called her his guardian angel.

He had held her hand and talked to her, and when they raised him the spark of life had fled. Dead! yes, dead! and the winds sighed and moaned through the firs at the door, as though chanting a requiem, and the apple blossoms fell in a still white shower like the first chilling snow on a new-made grave, and although the dreadful night watch was over, the early sunrise seemed like twilight. Did Alice remember that other night-watch when she buried that other love?

Lovingly the body of Doctor Du Rie was carried to the churchyard. Clear and soft the sunlight fell on the tender green of the maples, a faint twitter of birds and insects, a gentle swaying of boughs, a fragrant perfume of forest trees—above the azure of a May sky—such was the day they lowered all that was mortal of their beloved physician, amid the daisies and violets, there to rest beside his one child—his little boy Searle.

Loving hands placed flowers above him, and loving hearts enshrined his memory while life should last, and Alice—what should Alice do now? Go home? Alas! her father and mother were dead, but she could, at least, visit their graves—and so she resolved to do.

Disposing of the beautiful home she had lived in seven years, and to which she was much attached, she started for her native place, and found that yellow fever had broken out. Her first impulse was to return, but second thought convinced her she had already exposed herself to the danger of infection; and then why should she go back?

About two weeks after her arrival word was passed from one to another that one of the physicians was taken, and in a few minutes Alice followed a messenger into the presence of the raving patient, and as her eyes fell upon his face, all distorted, discoloured as it was, her strength deserted her, and she grasped the door frame for support, while all before her seemed blank.

She had met old friends before, had gone down to the brink of the dark river of death with many, and had her heart wrung over and over every day, but never before had the icy waters almost loved her own soul as they did now as she gazed upon—Charlie.

The attendant, noticing her agitation, hastily handed her a glass of water, and as she humbly drank it, he answered the inquiring look she directed toward the suffering man.

"Doctor Holbrook—very bad case—unaccommodated—sure death!"

Then, taking the glass from her cold fingers, he hastily departed, and Alice stiffly arose and began her duties as a nurse.

Who can describe her feelings all through that dreadful night—a third night watch—when the physicians shook their heads, and her own experience and observation confirmed their worst fears?

All night and all day; but he woke to reason, once more as the last rays of the setting sun lit up the distant horizon; and as his eyes met those of Alice above his fever-tossed pillow, he smiled as one not surprised, and stretched up his arms, while feebly, very feebly, his lips framed the words:

"Forgive—I thought I'd find you, my darling."

Then his eyes roved around to his coat hanging on the wall, while a slight inclination of the weary head diverted Alice's attention there. Their interview we will pass over as too sacred for mortal eye; but when the attending physician went his round he found the golden locks and the brown mingling on one pillow, and the arms of the nurse clasped around the neck of the patient, upon whose face was the sweet smile of that peaceful sleep that knows no waking.

They said the nurse had fainted while trying to ease her patient's position, and they gently separated them—and while some of them quickly bore the doctor's body away, others attended to reviving the nurse.

All night they laboured, but at break of day the faint breath that had fluttered upon her lips passed away, and Alice's last night's watch was over. For her there was no more night, but day, bright, perpetual day.

Sister Agnes was deputed to search for some token of identity, for Alice's arrival being unannounced but few recognised her. Around her neck was found a hair chain, attached to which was a gold locket, containing in one side the picture of a curly haired, blue-eyed, laughing-faced boy of three years. On the rim of the locket underneath the picture was engraved "Little Searle." On the reverse side was the picture of Charlie Holbrook.

In the pocket of her wrapper were found three letters; one addressed "Miss Allie Evans, C—," and immediately Sister Agnes was Sara Hillis again, and sitting among the flowers in the pleasant grounds of C—, looking with dismay at this identical letter thrown into her lap ten years ago. The second letter was addressed "Miss Alice Evans," and had written across one end, "not to be answered." The third had evidently been written lately, and its contents we transcribe.

"ALICE—I dare not call you by any of the pet names in my heart, for I know I deserve all the contempt I fear you feel for me, but I must write the confession that is wearing my life away—even though you never read it. I am resolved to go in search of you; perhaps I may hear the word forgiven from your own lips. I have been deceived; your friend Cora was treacherous, and I was silly, stupid, jealous enough to believe her insinuations. Ten years ago Barry Walters received a letter from Cora, in which she wrote (I know the extract word for word) 'You say you think Charlie would lose his place for Alice, and I think he'd be very foolish to do so, for Alice is only hood-winking him for a purpose of her own—namely, the pleasure of having two strings to her bow; but I know Prof. L— is to be married soon to—I know who, and you can guess; but Charlie H— will not so much as be invited to the wedding. Do you suppose Alice is at so much trouble to obtain such a superior education to waste it on Charlie Holbrook? No, indeed—she expects to shine in a higher sphere, and as the wife of Prof. L— she can make a greater sensation than she could as the wife of Charlie Holbrook.'

This is no secret, either, as Charlie could easily ascertain if he made inquiries of any of us girls."

"Of course, Barry showed me the letter, and I, poor, weak, credulous fool, remembering how few letters I had received, was no longer willing to believe your excuse of hard lessons and no time. Discontent at my curtailed correspondence opened the way for Cora's insinuations, and when my next letter was not answered at all, my suspicions became certainties, and, no longer able to endure my misery, I began the study of medicine, thinking thus to drown my thoughts, and at the same time enter the charmed circle to which you aspired."

"Before leaving home I slyly made the inquiries suggested by Cora, and had my worst fears fully confirmed, as all I asked, returned the answer that Prof. L— was engaged to Alice Evans."

"Some time afterwards Barry Walters fell heir to a small fortune, through an aunt, and soon prevailed upon Cora Thorp to share it with him. As Barry did not give up the situation in my father's warehouse, we met as friends again after five years."

"One day Mrs. Walters was thrown from her horse and dangerously injured, and Barry sent for me, the nearest doctor. I went and found her in a high state of nervous excitement, and, woman-like, fearing the worst. Of course, the excitement eventuated in a fever, and the second night after the accident, at Barry's earnest solicitation, I remained with my patient. All night long she lived over the scenes of her school life, and to my great horror, imagined herself writing over and over again that letter that had shipwrecked my happiness. She called upon Alice to forgive her, and promised to confess, while she begged of me not to kill her for her wickedness."

"Barry listened with sorrow and consternation, while I—who can picture or imagine the misery, the agony of mind I underwent all the weary night as the light slowly dawned upon my blinded senses, and the darkness of despair slowly settled down on my soul."

"Through her unconscious ravings I understood it all, and when at last she returned to reason I needed no confirmation of what I already knew. True, Prof. L— did marry Miss Alice Evans—strange coincidence in names—Miss Alice Evans of Brighton—and you, so busy in other matters, had not ever heard the gossip, and I—dolt that I was—had been too hasty, too outraged, to inquire into any particulars."

"What more can I say? Nothing in my own justification. Only this—forgive and receive, for I have suffered; and the rest of my life is entirely yours if you will deign to accept—if not, oh, forgive my erring Charlie!"

My story is finished. In a quiet, lovely spot, where the yellow sunbeams rest through the year, and fling their lingering radiance as the sun sinks in the west, the remains of Charlie and Alice peacefully lie. United at last—in death.

M. M.

## FACETIE.

### "VOLUMES."

AMATEUR COMPOSER: "Heard my new song?"

CANDID FRIEND (with a perceptible shudder): "Oh lor! I hope so!" —Punch.

### A TASTE OF THE TIMES.

MR. MOLONY (Irish farmer, to Mr. Flynn, the agent): "Sure, I've come to ask yer honner to say a word to the masther for me, for the black borean holdin'."

AGENT: "No, Molony, the masther won't take a tenant without capital."

M. M.: "And is it capital! Sure, I've three hundred pounds in the bank this minit!"

AGENT: "Oh, I thought I saw your name to that petition for a reduction of rents, as you were all starving!"



M. M.: "Tare an' agers! Mr. Flynn darlin'! Is the petition gone to the mather yet? If your honner could just give me a houl't av it, that I may strike my name out!" —Punch.

#### FROM THE GENERAL TO THE PARTICULAR.

THE NEW GOVERNESS: "Now, I suppose you know that there are three times as much water as land upon the surface of the earth?"

TOMMY: "I should think so, indeed! Look at the puddles!" —Punch.

#### ALARM.

HIS REVERENCE: "I was sorry not to see you at church this evening, John."

JOHN: "Lor, you fritens a body zo, sir!"

H. R.: "My mission is to alarm the unconverted, John."

JOHN: "'Tian't that, sir; you zed in your sarment the mornin' that 'twas no use trustin' to the common faters, and I never plants no other soart; so I've a-bin down to tater field to zee 'ow they be lookin'. Mine be all right, zo var. You shouldn't friten a body zo, sir." —Fun.

#### TOIL AND TROUBLE.

BOB: "Well, Tom, how be'st thou this morn'?"

TOM: "I oughter to be doing well; had a couple of fowls for breakfast—a foul look and a foul tongue; besides the tea were made of rue and torment, and the water came from Grumble well." —Fun.

#### WON BY A TONGUE.

BOBBY (reading sporting intelligence): "Ma dear, what do they mean by a dead heat in a race?"

MAMMA: "When two horses reach the winning post at the same time, so there are two winners."

BOBBY: "But why doesn't one of the horses put out his tongue, and so win?" —Fun.

#### ON THE HUNT.

GENTLEMAN IN ROAD: "Are ye callin' that could baste of yours a clever hunter, Barney?"

BARNEY: "Indeed I am, thim. He's always huntin' for a bit of somethin' to ate; and bedad he's clever whin he finds it." —Fun.

#### ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

BEAUTY (weary of a tiresome rigmarole): "The beautiful language in which you have expressed yourself, Major, convinces me that"

MAJOR: "That, singular as it may seem, you are my first love?"

BEAUTY: "No, Major—your last."

—Funny Folks.

"THERE'S A DIVINITY DOETH HEDGE," &c.

JUVENILE SCOLD: "Yer nasty little thing! if yer father wasn't a p'liceman, I'd smack yer!" —Punch.

#### "WHERE COURAGE LIES."

FAT FARMER: "Courage and enterprise? Why, wot with these 'ard times, I sometimes feel as if I 'adn't got none! Seems as if I 'adnt got no stomach!" —Fun.

#### "FOR BUILDING ON."

MERCHANT (log): "Weel, Donal, that's been awfu' times for sheep."

DONALD: "Nae only for them, but ach! A' thing's gaen to thae deevil a' noo."

MERCHANT: "Sosh, man! if that's the way o't, he'll need till exten' his premises." —Fun.

#### A NEW DEFINITION.

PAUL (a most execrable painter): "Don't know the difference between genius and mere talent! Just don't I, though! Look here! If a fellow knows how to paint, for instance, and he's got plenty to say for himself besides, and looks like a downright clever, jolly, smart, well-dressed, witty, pleasant and intelligent chap all round, he's merely a man of talent. That's me!"

PETER (a more execrable painter): "Oh, that's you, is it?"

PAUL: "Yes. But if he only knows how to paint, and can't say 'boh' to a goose, and looks as if he'd just been promoted from Earlswood to Colney Hatch, he's a genius!"

PETER: "Ah! I suppose that's me?"

PAUL: "Yes, if you only knew how to paint!" —Punch.

#### ONLY A YEAR SINCE THEN.

'Twas here, on this old bridge, last summer we stood.

And watched the clear stream go away through the wood;

On this same old stone ledge we used for to lean;

Content in our love dreams, admiring the scene.

I almost can now think the impression I see

Of her arm in the moss as she stood watching me.

And what did the stream say? Ah! well do I know;

But, alas! times have changed since one short year ago.

The stream murmured softly in musical sighs,

While sweetly reflecting the azure blue skies,

That she whom I trusted—nay, loved as my all,

Was good, true, and faithful, and never would fall.

But, now do I find that the song that was sung

Were hopes harboured up that were cruelly wrong

From my heart, that was held by the beautiful maid,

Who stood in my arms, while her love vows she said.

She oft took my hand and would lead me away

To shades in the woodland, where long we would play,

Unmindful of time, only happy that we

Were straying together and gay as could be.

One day do I mind, will I never forget?

We stood arm-in-arm, and our lips often met.

The sky was as pure as I thought was her heart,

And I loved her e'en more as we now had to part.

We murmured adieu, and, as parting away,

We spoke of the joys of some future day;

But, alas! truth it is, "out of sight 'out of mind;"

And 'twas proved by the heartless coquette left behind.

I had just been gone a few months when I was told

That she whom I loved had just wedded for gold;

But I could not believe her so heartless and vain,

Till her silence convinced me we'd ne'er meet again.

Away from my heart, such an image I curse,

Its pains have been cruel, it might have been worse.

All thoughts that now come I spurn them as dirt.

For my heart couldn't live filled with thoughts of a flirt. S. B. N.

COURAGE is the distinguishing attribute of men; modesty that of women.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SCALLOPED EGGS.—Mince any kind of cold meat, season with pepper and salt, adding a few breadcrumbs; cover the bottom of preserve saucers with it, putting in each a small piece of butter; break a fresh egg on top, set on a slide in a hot oven; when the egg begins to cook, sprinkle a little cracker rolled very fine on it, with a dust of salt and pepper; send it to table hot; breakfast or lunch.

PUDDING UNDER ROAST BEEF.—Five and a half ounces of breakfast roll or oven cake, three-quarters of a pint of boiling milk; soak it well; then beat it up with a fork; add three eggs and a little salt; when half done, turn it carefully.

CELERY LEAVES.—Most housekeepers throw away the leaves and green tops of celery. There is a better way than this. Dry them thoroughly in the oven, then pulverise to a fine powder, and they make a very delicious seasoning for soup, the aroma and strength of the celery being remarkably preserved. After being pulverised, the powder should be kept in a jar or closed bottle to preserve the strength.

TO COOK LENTILS.—First soak them in cold water for several hours, and then put them on the fire in cold water, with a little salt added; allow them to simmer for two or three hours till tender. Pour off the water, and stand them on the hob to dry. Serve them with gravy or melted butter, if preferred. They answer the purpose of potatoes.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

At San Francisco, recently, General Grant shook 1,043 hands in one hour and eight minutes—a sample of endurance of which any pedestrian might be proud.

Numerous flights of woodcocks have passed over Jersey Island from the north, making their way to the warmer climate of France. Many have been shot on their passage, and found to be large and plump birds. The early departure—some weeks before the usual time—is said to denote an early and severe winter.

MR. J. J. MACH, of Tiptree Hall, Kelvedon, Essex, will, for the public good, send (on application accompanied by a postage stamp) instructions for the construction of the "Parson's" or "front fire-grate." The tested gain by the use of this grate is an increase of 16 degrees of temperature with a saving of one-third in fuel.

The electric light is steadily growing in favour for lighthouse purposes. Our Trinity Board has long ago recognised its great advantages, and the South Australians have recently determined to use it at Cape Northumberland, and are prepared to expend £20,000 for the purpose.

Two 80-ton guns are to be placed on Dover Pier for the defence of that important station, and a turret is being constructed and fitted for their reception. They are being built in the Royal Gun Factories, Woolwich, and are similar in all respects to the four guns awaiting the completion of the "Inflexible."

THERE is a gradual reduction going on in the hands employed at Chatham Dockyard. The discharge will be continued weekly until the number employed is reduced to that provided for in the last estimates. For a long time past that number has been exceeded in consequence of the work in hand, but as the money is running short it has been found necessary to make the discharges.

A PLAN has been prepared of a Channel ferry of huge dimensions, by which it is proposed to establish railway communication with the Continent without break of bulk for goods, or change of carriage for passengers. The construction is a novelty in shipbuilding, being similar in design to the new ship being built for the Czar of Russia, except that instead of being shaped like a turbot, a "sole" would more nearly represent her form.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**WALTER A.**—The Americans having attained a high degree of prosperity, and wishing to shake off the trammels imposed on their trade by the mother country, thirteen of the provinces revolted in 1776, and in 1783 succeeded in accomplishing their independence, and getting acknowledged as the newly established Federal Republic of the United States.

**HONORICS.**—Providing all other considerations are favourable, we attach very little importance to the fact of your being two years and some odd months older than the man you propose to marry. You are old enough to act and judge for yourself.

**R. S. J.**—On the bare details submitted by you we should say you would recover the balance unpaid in the County Court.

**DARE.**—1. The advertisements are genuine. 2. We make no charge for the insertion of matrimonial advertisements.

**INQUIRING ONE.**—1. The use of a leaden comb is recommended for darkening the hair. 2. Wholesome diet, plenty of exercise, and wash the face occasionally in oatmeal water.

**R. B.**—It is understood that dog-fanciers administer gin in small doses to puppies to check their growth; but we don't believe in it, or any other remedy for such a purpose.

**DY CUMERY.**—Candidly we do not think that any school would take your boy if, as you say, he is an imbecile and a rogue.

**MARGARET.**—The Editor will obtain the book for you if you cannot get it yourself. The price of it, including postage, is 2s. 10d.

**ULYSSES.**—1. Both parties are supposed to live for three weeks within the parish in which they wish to marry prior to the marriage. The banns need not be posted up in the country. 2. The consent of the parents is taken for granted if they do not openly prohibit the ceremony at the altar.

**AN INQUISITIVE ONE.**—1. A phoenix is a fabulous bird of antiquity. It was said to live 500 years in the wilderness, and then return to Egypt, when, having built itself a nest, it was consumed, and from the ashes of the old bird sprang its successor. 2. A sea-serpent is an enormous marine animal resembling a serpent, said to have been repeatedly seen off the coasts of America and Africa, but generally esteemed to be fabulous. 3. No.

**OSKALOBA.**—The number of instruments in a brass band varies. Some band masters think that twenty-four are enough, and others want sixty. As a general thing, persons living near the practicing room of a band think that a dozen are enough.

**BENJAMIN.**—It is a very unlikely thing that a large number of respectable persons should combine to treat you unkindly without some reason which it would be proper to state to you, and so give you an opportunity of explanation. It may be that you are under some misapprehension. Take time to correct your impressions. If you continue to have reason to think yourself kindly treated it will be proper to ask one of them if there is anything believed by your associates to your disadvantage. Do nothing rashly, and do not leave without frank inquiry.

**VERA.**—While you have cause to be anxious on the information given, yet there may be error or mischief in it. Do nothing hastily. Give him an opportunity of disclaiming or explaining. If you have a mother or other such relative whom you can trust get advice as to your best course. One who knows all the circumstances may see the thing in a juster light than you do, and may be able to counsel you dispassionately.

**FANNIE.**—Something depends upon the length of time you endured your misery. Something also depends on your child's prospects. We doubt if a wife is bound to endure such misery as you describe for life; but she ought not to abandon the husband who occasions it until she has exhausted all the means of reforming him, and any steps she takes ought to be under wise, and generally under legal counsel.

## OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

WITH No. 868, PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12th,

WILL BE ISSUED

## OUR CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER,

Containing Well Written Tales by Authors of Repute.

FORTY PAGES. PRICE TWOPENCE.

**HARD TACK**, twenty-one, medium height, blue eyes, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

**MADGE**, twenty-one, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman between twenty-five and thirty.

**STEAM SIREN**, twenty-three, fair, good-looking, medium height, a signalman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

**TEPPER**, short, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a middle-aged man (mechanic). A widower not objected to.

**ACTION RIGHT** and **RIGHT TAKE GROUND**, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies residing in Plymouth. Action Right is twenty-two, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of music. Right Take Ground is twenty-three, loving, tall, light hair, grey eyes. Respondents must be about nineteen, fond of dancing.

**R. F. H.**, twenty, fair, brown eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

**HOOK POT** and **GLIM SCORCE**, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Hook Pot is fair, medium height, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Glim Scorce is dark, fond of music, medium height.

**HARRIET** and **FRISCILLA**, two friends, would like to correspond with two tradesmen. Harriet is eighteen, fair. Friscilla is twenty-one, tall, dark.

## A SECRET.

I clasped your cold hand in my own,  
And to my lips I pressed it,  
And thus became the secret known,  
Else you might not have kept it—  
A secret I had thought to keep  
Locked in my breast for ever;  
Within a long and lasting sleep,  
Reveal it never, never!

Oh! is it sinful, love like mine?  
If not, receive this token  
That I shall worship at thy shrine,  
Also no vows are spoken.  
For near thee all is fair and bright,  
And from thee all is dreary;  
For from thy eyes beams forth the light  
That makes my heart so merry.

And were it not a hand forbade  
I might reveal a story  
To thee, oh! fair and beautiful maid,  
Of what would be my glory;  
But, ah! the secret I must keep  
Deep-locked within my bosom,  
So, golden Cupid, go to sleep,  
And weep and wait, dear blossom. M. H. M.

**WRITE QUICK**, **ELEVATE REST**, and **CYPRUS JACK**, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Write Quick is twenty-two, tall, handsome, fond of children. Elevate Rest is twenty-one, fond of dancing. Cyprus Jack is nineteen, fond of children.

**ANNIE**, seventeen, loving, fair, brown hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about nineteen, good-looking, and must reside in London.

**CINDER KNOTER** and **OIL FEDDER**, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Cinder Knoter is dark, of a loving disposition. Oil Fedder is twenty-one, fair, blue eyes, fond of children.

**GERTRUDE** and **MINNIE**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Gertrude is twenty, dark hair and eyes, medium height. Minnie is nineteen, brown hair, blue eyes. Respondents must not be above twenty-four.

**BOWER ANCHOR** and **BILL BOARD**, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Bower Anchor is twenty-two, tall, light hair, blue eyes. Bill Board is twenty-one, medium height, fond of dancing, loving. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-two.

**T. H.**, twenty-one, good-looking, loving, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen.

**LILY**, **VIOLET**, and **DAISY**, three friends, would like to correspond with three gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lily is twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes. Violet is twenty-one, dark, fond of home and children. Daisy is nineteen, fair, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be tall, dark, loving, and in good positions.

**ALBERT** and **FRED**, two brothers, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Albert is twenty, medium height, fair, loving. Fred is nineteen, fair, fond of home.

**MAGGIE M.**, thirty-four, medium height, dark, a widow, with one little girl, would like to correspond with a tradesman about the same age. Respondents must be loving, fond of home.

**BLACKSMITH'S CHAP** and **KINGHO**, two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies. Blacksmith's Chap is twenty-two, fair, medium height. Kingho is twenty-three, fair, of a loving disposition. Residents of Belfast preferred.

**BREECH SCREW**, **TOMPION**, and **VENT PIECE**, three petty officers in the R.M.A., wish to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Breech Screw is tall, dark hair and eyes. Tompion is good-looking, hazel eyes. Vent Piece is dark, medium height, hazel eyes.

**POLARISER**, **NEUTRALISER**, and **CELLULOSE**, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Polariser is dark, medium height, fond of music and dancing. Neutraliser is fond of children, fair. Cellulose is fair, fond of music and children.

**FAIR ONE**, twenty-two, fond of home, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman residing in Hampshire.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**DESIDERANS AWAYTH** is responded to by—Isabel, twenty-five, light hair, grey eyes, medium height, fond of home and children, domesticated.

**MAIN BRACE** by—Emily, seventeen, dark, of a loving disposition.

**RUN OUT** by—Nellie, eighteen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes, fond of children.

**SALLIA D.** by—Smuggler.

**DITTY BOX** by—Nelly, twenty, dark, brown hair and eyes, medium height.

**OLSKIN** by—Celia, twenty-three, brown hair, blue eyes, fair, fond of home and children.

**BLACK HAT** by—Bessie, nineteen, dark, brown hair and eyes, medium height.

**THULL** by—Carrie, twenty-six, dark hair and eyes, fair, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition, medium height.

**TENDER JACK** by—Dorothy, twenty, good-looking, brown hair and eyes.

**ALICE** by—George.

**ONE MORE LEFT** by—Lotty, eighteen, dark hair and eyes, fond of music, loving.

**RUN OUT** by—Maggie, seventeen, dark, thoroughly domesticated.

**FORK LIFT** by—Jennie, eighteen, tall, fair, fond of music and dancing.

**MAIN BRACE** by—Annie, nineteen, dark hair and eyes, tall, fond of home and children.

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